

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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EL ELEMENTO ORIENTAL EN D. JUAN MANUEL: SÍNTESIS Y REVALUACIÓN

DIEGO MARÍN

EL TEMA de la influencia oriental en D. Juan Manuel¹ es tópico corriente de la historia literaria española, donde con frecuencia se han visto fuentes escritas ante meros casos de coincidencias temáticas o han sido supuestas cuando faltaba una fuente oriental conveniente (como hizo Menéndez y Pelayo con la versión desconocida de Ibn Chisdai para explicar la influencia de *Barlaam y Josafat* en D. Juan Manuel). Asimismo, se ha tendido a ver en él un erudito conocedor de manuscritos latinos y aún árabes, aunque sabemos que no era hombre libresco sino un gran señor feudal metido de lleno en las turbulencias político-militares de su tiempo; que sabía poco latín y menos árabe; que, contra la práctica medieval, apenas cita sus fuentes, aunque continuamente habla de sí mismo; que obras como el *Conde Lucanor* parecen dictadas más que escritas por su autor.² Todo lo cual sugiere el uso de tradiciones orales y de la propia experiencia personal más que de fuentes escritas y más o menos eruditas. De aquí la conveniencia de examinar los resultados de las investigaciones realizadas hasta la fecha sobre este tema para ver cómo se operó esa influencia oriental y, sobre todo, para tratar de enfocar el problema en sus verdaderos términos. Siguiendo la línea sugerida por Américo Castro acerca del Arcipreste de Hita en *España en su historia*, lo significativo del tema no está tanto en examinar las fuentes utilizadas por D. Juan Manuel como en observar a éste en su condición de repre-

¹ Debo al Sr. González-Llubera valiosas sugerencias y críticas sobre este ensayo.

² Como indica la fórmula usada al final de cada ejemplo: "Et porque don Joahn tovo estos por buenos enxiemplos, fizolos escribir en este libro et fizo estos viessos que dizen asi."

sentante destacado de esa literatura mudéjar que florece hacia el siglo XIV y que forma el punto de convergencia o "simbiosis" de las culturas oriental y occidental tan típico y singular de España.³ No se trata tanto de saber qué fuentes utiliza nuestro autor como de entender la forma en que lo hace, los elementos que adopta y los que rechaza, y por qué. Dada la originalidad con que la fuerte personalidad del infante maneja sus materiales, y el hecho de que éstos proceden casi siempre de fuentes desconocidas (probablemente de tradiciones orales), se hace aun más necesaria la tarea de rastrear el fondo árabe que pueda haber en la "actitud vital" de D. Juan Manuel, y distinguirlo de lo que en ésta haya de cristiano-occidental.

Formado en el ambiente intelectual de la escuela toledana y asistido del consabido médico judío o letrado moro, D. Juan Manuel hubo sin duda de conocer los libros árabes que circulaban y se traducían en la corte del Rey Sabio, pero no se cree que leyese los originales. Precisamente la libertad con que maneja los temas existentes en textos árabes o latinos, refuerza la impresión ya apuntada de un autor que los ha oído más bien que leído. Ni bastan para atribuirle un conocimiento serio del árabe las tres frases proverbiales que cita en el *Conde Lucanor*,⁴ o su alusión a los "moros muy sabidores" con quienes conversara.⁵ Como guerrero y político, tuvo estrecho contacto con los árabes españoles, unas veces enemigos y otras aliados suyos, pero de tal contacto poco más sacaría que algunas frases y dichos populares, como los que cita en el *Conde Lucanor*. Incluso las anécdotas de carácter árabe que relata pudieron haber pasado ya al folklore hispano-cristiano del sur de España, como es probable que sea el caso del Exemplo XXVI (El árbol de la Mentira).⁶

Empecemos por notar, de todos modos, que hay al menos nueve "enxiemplos" en el *Conde Lucanor* derivados de una tradición árabe, ya que no parece existir versión latina o romance de ellos y son los únicos en que se ha mantenido la atmósfera islámica.⁷ La inexistencia de fuentes árabes conocidas hace pensar en una tradición oral. Un examen de tales ejemplos (XX, XXI, XXIV, XXV, XXX, XXXII, XXXV, XLI, XLVI, XLVII) sugiere en seguida que las siguientes características se enlazarían con la fuente árabe:

(a) Ciertos temas que se hallan en fuentes árabes tradicionales, como la anécdota del rey Abenabet de Sevilla y Romaiquía (Ex.

³ Con obras como el *Libro de buen amor*, *El Cavallero Cifar*, *Castigos e Documentos del rey don Sancho*, la *Historia de la doncella Teodor*.

⁴ Ex. XXX, XLI, XLVII.

⁵ *Libro de los Estados*, ed. Gayangos, BAE, LI, 345b. (Las páginas citadas en el texto se refieren a esta edición).

⁶ Véase G. Moldenhauer, *Die Legende von Barladm und Josaphat auf der iberischen Halbinsel* (Halle, 1929), pág. 93.

⁷ Véase María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, "Tres notas sobre don Juan Manuel," *Rom. Phil.*, IV (1950-51), 155-194.

XXX);⁸ otros que deben venir de una tradición oral, como la anécdota del rey Alhaquem de Córdoba y su "añadimiento" al albogón que produjo la mofa pública ante la "hazaña" del rey (Ex. XLI); otros que aparecen como variantes, sugeridoras de una fuente común, en obras impregnadas de arabismo como son *El Cavallero Cifar* y el *Felix* de Lull (Ex. XX, sobre el fingido alquimista que acuñaba doblas con una substancia ficticia llamada, en árabe, "tabardit"⁹).

(b) La técnica típicamente oriental del "arco lobulado," o encasillamiento de narraciones subsidiarias dentro del marco general de una historia que las enlaza a todas, está presente tanto en el *Conde Lucanor* como en el *Libro de los Estados*, y también se da dentro de una historia singular, como en el Exemplo XXI, aunque D. Juan Manuel no lleva nunca esta técnica tan lejos como los autores orientales. Así, en este ejemplo sólo se insertan dos cuentos secundarios en el marco general de "Lucanor y Patronio": el cuento del "rey, el hijo y el filósofo" y, dentro de éste, el de "las cornejas."

(c) La cita en árabe de dichos proverbiales que sirven de base al cuento (Ex. XXX, XLI, XLVII).

(d) La atmósfera árabe está preservada y tratada con simpatía, bien con una idealización del esplendor cortesano, como en el Exemplo XXX, o con un retrato idealizado de un rey árabe, modelo de prudencia y bondad, como Saladín en el Exemplo XXV; o con alusiones a la vida doméstica y costumbres de los moros, como en los Ejemplos XXXII y XXXV; o con un asunto que roza en lo escatológico, muy raro en nuestro autor pero normal en la tradición árabe de que procede (Ex. XLVI, "De lo que contescio a un philosopho que por ocasion entro en una calle do moravan malas mugeres").

Uno de los principales vehículos de transmisión occidental de los apólogos árabes fueron las colecciones hechas por los dominicos para ilustrar sus sermones en los siglos XIII y XIV, como la *Legenda aurea* de Giacomo di Voraggio y el *Speculum historiale* de Vincent de Beauvais, hechas en tiempo de Alfonso X y probablemente conocidas, directa o indirectamente, por D. Juan Manuel.¹⁰ No es ésta una suposición aventurada en vista de la admiración sentida por el infante hacia los dominicos, para quienes erigió un monasterio en Peñafiel (1324), encargado de custodiar sus obras, y a quienes dedicó un opúsculo encomiástico al final del *Libro de los Estados*, como la más "buena" y "sancta" de todas las órdenes religiosas. Dado el ascendiente personal

⁸ Cf. Al Makkari, trad. Gayangos en *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (Londres, 1843), I, 299.

⁹ A. Steiger lo explica como femenino del bereber *aberdí*, andrajería, evitando así la suposición tradicional de ser palabra árabe ficticia ("El Conde Lucanor," *Clavileño*, No. 23, 1953, pág. 5).

¹⁰ Vincent envió un ejemplar del *Speculum* al rey Alfonso el Sabio y fue ampliamente usado por los compiladores de las *Partidas* y la *General Estoria*.

y religioso de estos frailes predicadores en D. Juan Manuel, es de presumir que éste conociese los apólogos orientales de sus sermones.¹¹ Knust ha señalado¹² la probable fuente dominica de los Exemplos XI, XXXVI, XLIX, cuya característica común es la asimilación al medio cristiano y la desaparición del ambiente árabe original, fenómeno explicable dado el uso de tales cuentos como ilustración popular de sermones. El caso de los Exemplos XIV y XL, evidentemente de origen dominico, corrobora la suposición de que los otros apólogos de índole oriental también llegaron a manos del infante por la vía dominica.

Aparte de los apólogos relacionados con tradiciones árabes desconocidas para nosotros, se encuentran huellas concretas de obras orientales en D. Juan Manuel que se suponen llegadas a él a través de versiones latinas o romances, si no de tradiciones orales.

Desde que Menéndez y Pelayo usara la frase se viene llamando al *Libro de los Estados* la más antigua versión española (1330) del *Barlaam y Josafat*, y la cuestión de la relación entre ambos se ha debatido desde que el erudito santanderino sugirió una versión oriental, árabe o hebrea, en vez de la griega (atribuida a San Juan de Damasco) como la fuente usada por D. Juan Manuel. Menéndez y Pelayo se veía obligado a postular una versión oriental desconocida para justificar las palmarias diferencias que separan la obra del infante del *Barlaam* griego, principalmente la limitación de los tres encuentros del príncipe a uno, con el muerto, que es precisamente el omitido en el texto griego, y la motivación puramente humana de la reclusión del príncipe en el *Libro* frente a la motivación religiosa en *Barlaam*. Menéndez y Pelayo concluía que D. Juan Manuel pudo haber conocido la traducción de alguna versión árabe hecha por un judío como Ibn Chisdai.¹³

Contra esta tesis orientalista ha prevalecido la occidentalista de Moldenhauer,¹⁴ que ha buscado la fuente directa del asunto de *Barlaam* y *Josafat* en las versiones latinas derivadas del texto griego, hechas tal vez por los dominicos. El último estudio sobre el *Libro de los Estados* (*El arte de gobernar en las obras de D. Juan Manuel*, de Castro y Calvo) acepta la tesis occidentalista, pero sin ofrecer nuevas pruebas.

En realidad, la cuestión de hallar una conexión entre el *Libro de los Estados* y el *Barlaam* es un tanto académica puesto que aquél es completamente distinto, en esencia y propósito, de éste. Lo único que interesa es ver qué elementos del *Barlaam* utiliza D. Juan Manuel y cuáles rechaza para seguir su plan. Del *Barlaam* proceden la forma o marco general de la historia y la idea que la inspira—la salvación del alma—pero el contenido de la obra española se hace occidental al

¹¹ Véase Lida, *loc. cit.*, pág. 157 y Moldenhauer, *op. cit.*, pág. 92.

¹² Ed. de *El Conde Lucanor* (Leipzig, 1900).

¹³ *Orígenes de la novela*, I, lxxxviii-lxxxix.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, págs. 94 y ss.

desaparecer el equilibrio entre lo didáctico y lo novelesco que caracteriza a la literatura oriental y separarlos en dos libros distintos: el *Conde Lucanor*, cuyo interés se centra en cuentos artísticamente contruidos, como unidades autónomas, y el *Libro de los Estados*, en que la ficción sirve sólo de pretexto para la exposición doctrinal y la educación de un príncipe. Por otro lado, ciertos aspectos del *Barlaam* griego brillan por su ausencia en D. Juan Manuel, como la persecución inicial de los súbditos cristianos, la indignación del rey ante la "apostasía" del príncipe, las intervenciones milagrosas en favor del cristianismo, la lucha contra la fe y la castidad del príncipe cristiano, el contraste entre el reino "bueno" del hijo cristiano y el "malo" del padre infiel. Y es que la obra esencialmente ascética de origen oriental se convierte en D. Juan Manuel en un tratado práctico de gobierno, preocupado sí por el destino del alma en la otra vida, pero absorbido por los problemas mundanos de ésta.

Relacionados también con *Barlaam* hay tres ejemplos en el *Conde Lucanor*, que parecen confirmar la tesis de que D. Juan Manuel conoció alguna versión del texto griego. El Exemplo I, sobre el rey que quiso probar a su privado, se halla en el *Barlaam* griego (IV, 22-26), pero con diferencias esenciales. El elemento religioso (un consejero cristiano y un rey anti-cristiano) falta en *Lucanor*; la intriga es más compleja y rápida en *Barlaam*, y la solución más accidental. D. Juan Manuel, como siempre, maneja el material más artísticamente, con deliberada sencillez de construcción. Sin embargo, las dos versiones tienen suficientes rasgos comunes para justificar su conexión, aunque no necesariamente directa.¹⁵ Los Ejemplos XLVIII (prueba de los amigos) y XLIX (rey por un año) corresponden, respectivamente, a los apólogos V y VI del *Barlaam* griego y van seguidos en ambas obras de una interpretación espiritual parecida. Pero puesto que el Exemplo XLVIII se da también en la *Disciplina Clericalis* y es probable que, como Knust ha indicado, el Exemplo XLIX tenga una fuente dominica, no cabe concluir que su autor utilizó el *Barlaam* como fuente. De nuevo aquí la forma gana en la construcción artística del cuento al hacerlo independiente de la alegoría y dar mayor sutileza a la acción, especialmente en el Exemplo XLVIII. Mientras que el contenido ideológico del Exemplo XLIX queda materialmente alterado por la incongruente adición a la tesis de la salvación mediante las buenas obras: "Pero seyendo estas cosas todas guardadas, todo lo que pudierdes fazer por levar vuestra onrra et vuestro estado adelante tengo que lo devedes fazer, et es bien que lo fagades" (pág. 420b).¹⁶ Vemos aquí el genio peculiar de D. Juan Manuel adaptando el tema a sus intereses y preocupaciones personales, como en la innovación que verifica al hacer

¹⁵ Moldenhauer, *op. cit.*, pág. 81.

¹⁶ Lida, *loc. cit.*, págs. 159-160.

que el rey de su cuento sepa de antemano el destino que le espera y tome la precaución de dejar amigos que cuiden de sus intereses en su ausencia, invención propia de la astuta personalidad política del autor. El Exemplo XLVIII ofrece aun mejor ilustración de la originalidad creadora de D. Juan Manuel, variando lo bastante en construcción y detalles significativos para rechazar el *Barlaam* como fuente, e incluso la *Disciplina Clericalis* como fuente directa.¹⁷

Resulta significativo, por otro lado, que la versión de estos ejemplos en Jacques de Vitry se aproxime más, en ciertos puntos, a la versión de D. Juan Manuel que los apólogos originales del *Barlaam*. Así, Vitry introduce la idea simbólica del sacrificio del amigo, con su alusión a Cristo (Exemplum CXX) que no existe en *Barlaam* y reaparece en el *Conde Lucanor*; en su Exemplum IX, Vitry no indica cómo supo el rey la costumbre del "reinado por un año," como tampoco lo indica D. Juan Manuel, mientras que *Barlaam* lo atribuye a un consejero del rey. No implica esto, sin embargo, un conocimiento directo de los sermones latinos de Vitry por parte del autor castellano. Es más verosímil que conociera tales apólogos a través de las colecciones hechas por los dominicos, como Knust ha mostrado con respecto al Exemplo XLIX.¹⁸

Es posible que D. Juan Manuel conociera la versión árabe del *Calila y Dimna* de Ibn Moqaffa a través de la traducción alfonsina,¹⁹ o que, como en otros casos, recogiera algunos apólogos del *Calila* en tradiciones orales de carácter árabe. Pero aquí también aparece un cambio significativo. Así como D. Juan Manuel seculariza el *Barlaam* en el *Libro de los Estados*, así también humaniza el *Calila y Dimna* sustituyendo los animales por hombres en la mayoría de los apólogos de esta fuente.

El cuento del toro y el león forma el marco general del asunto de "Calila y Dimna" propiamente dicho, con cuentos secundarios insertos en dicho marco. En el *Conde Lucanor* ese cuento queda reducido a un apólogo (Ex. XXII) y el chacal Dymna es reemplazado por un zorro, más propio del ambiente local. El efecto difuso del *Calila*, con sus interrupciones incidentales, da paso a una mayor intensidad dramática al narrar toda la historia seguida y acumular las sospechas del león con hábil gradación psicológica.

El Exemplo VII (Doña Truhana) es una reproducción casi idéntica del apólogo subsidiario del capítulo VIII de *Calila*, con una diferencia de detalle pero significativa: en *Calila* el protagonista es un clérigo que rompe de un golpe el tarro de miel mientras yace en el lecho

¹⁷ Moldenhauer, *op. cit.*, pág. 87.

¹⁸ Knust, *op. cit.*, págs. 412-414; Jacques de Vitry, *The Exempla*, ed. T. F. Crane (Londres, 1890).

¹⁹ Véase Gayangos, *BAE*, LI, 4, 8-9.

soñando fantasías vanas; en el *Conde Lucanor* es una activa mujer que va al mercado y a quien se le cae la olla de miel en su apresurado entusiasmo. Este cambio puede obedecer solamente a la idiosincrasia personal del autor, que rehuye normalmente la más leve nota anticlerical, pero no sería arbitrario relacionarlo con las fuentes dominicas de que ya hemos hablado.

El apólogo de los cuervos y los buhos (Ex. XIX) se halla en el Cap. VI de *Calila*, ilustrando en ambas versiones la misma idea del amigo falso que finge amor y humildad para engañar mejor a su víctima, pero varía en la forma al suprimir D. Juan Manuel los siete cuentos subsidiarios para ganar concentración en el principal.

Más significativo aún que el uso concreto de estas fábulas de *Calila* es el efecto que el espíritu de este disimulado y orientalisimo tratado político del arte de intrigar debió tener en D. Juan Manuel. Era éste un político astuto y ambicioso, siempre dispuesto a cambiar de bando según lo exigiese su interés personal. Vivió, además, en un mundo de intriga y banderías (muy semejante al mundo vecino de los árabes) en que se precisaba mucha cautela y astucia para sobrevivir. Tal es el mundo que reflejan las fábulas de animales de *Calila*, y no es mucho suponer que si, como es verosímil, el infante leyó la versión castellana, lo hiciese con regodeo especial y pensase en utilizar la técnica del apólogo para ilustrar jugadas hipotético-reales del ajedrez político contemporáneo. Más curioso todavía resulta hallar que el espíritu mundano y amoral del *Calila* parece haberse infiltrado en el *Libro de los Estados*, reemplazando el impulso ascético y espiritual que éste recibiera inicialmente del *Barlaam*. Su resultado fué el primer tratado del arte de gobernar en lengua romance, anticipándose con mucho al *Príncipe* florentino, en el cual puede decirse que hallará plena y abierta formulación la sutil estrategia política encubierta bajo los apólogos del *Calila*. Lo mismo que los autores árabes, D. Juan Manuel sabía dejar a un lado los principios morales y religiosos, que como tales respetaba muy sinceramente, para ocuparse con "neutralidad" maquiavélica del arte práctico de la política y la guerra. Al hacerlo, se apartaba inconscientemente de la corriente moralista-religiosa que domina el occidente europeo hasta el Renacimiento.

Entre los libros orientales, el "*Sendebär*" (Sindibad) es el que menos rastro deja en D. Juan Manuel. La política y la religión eran las dos preocupaciones básicas de él, por afectar directamente a su vida en lo temporal y lo eterno, mientras que historias sobre los "engannos" de las mujeres, como tales, no debieron parecerle de bastante importancia para merecer su atención. Aunque Knust y González Palencia hallan la fuente de los Ejemplos XXIV, XXIX, LXVIII y L en *Syntipas*, el único de éstos que puede considerarse realmente relacionado con "*Sendebär*" es el L ("Leo"), y sólo indirectamente. "Leo" aparece

en el *Libro de los engannos* (No. 1), pero no parece probable que D. Juan Manuel tomase su cuento directamente de este libro, aunque sin duda le era conocido por haberse traducido en la escuela toledana, por orden de Don Fadrique, hermano del rey Alfonso. El desarrollo del tema presenta suficientes diferencias para sospechar que hubo otra fuente o para establecer la originalidad de D. Juan Manuel. La narración está muy ampliada con material nuevo, como la búsqueda de la "vergüenza" por Saladín, que sostiene la tensión dramática, mientras que por otro lado faltan en este exemplo la alusión al león y la intervención del marido y los parientes de la mujer acusada.

De la *Disciplina Clericalis*, primera colección europea de cuentos y sentencias árabes, hecha por el judío oscense Pedro Alfonso, hay trazas también en D. Juan Manuel, aunque ello no signifique una derivación directa. Notemos algunas diferencias. En la *Disciplina* las sentencias de sabiduría práctica y proverbial aparecen tanto insertas dentro de las narraciones como añadidas, formando largas series sin conexión orgánica.²⁰ En el *Lucanor*, en cambio, esta práctica se altera en beneficio de la unidad artística reduciendo las sentencias al dístico final que encierra la moraleja y acumulando el elemento proverbial en las partes II y III de la obra, como apéndice. Es curioso notar de paso que en estas partes el autor se propuso repetir las ideas de la primera parte en forma más condensada y oscura, por consejo de su amigo D. Jaime de Xérica, dándonos una razón muy árabe para hacerlo²¹ que sugiere el prurito de sutileza ingeniosa y deliberada oscuridad estilística en forma sentenciosa características del *maqāma* árabe, con sus variaciones retóricas sobre un mismo tema, en prosa rimada. Al propio tiempo, D. Juan Manuel se aparta de los precedentes árabes al imprimir mayor unidad formal a sus narraciones, despojándolas, como hemos apuntado ya, de los episodios intercalados que distraen la atención respecto del tema central.

El Exemplo XLVIII del *Conde Lucanor* tiene un precedente en la *Disciplina Clericalis* (Ex. I, "De dimidio amico," y II, "De integro amico"), donde la idea es la misma (necesidad de probar a los amigos para conocerlos) y las anécdotas parecidas, pero con variaciones en *Lucanor* que impiden considerar la *Disciplina* como fuente inmediata. Así, los cien amigos que dice tener el hijo son reducidos a diez por D. Juan Manuel, dando más verosimilitud a la idea; el becerro es sustituido por un puerco en el *Lucanor*, libre del tabú semítico; el efecto dramático se intensifica con la bofetada del hijo a su protector, el "medio amigo," que le perdona, y con el sacrificio de su propio hijo

²⁰ El antecedente hispano-árabe más conocido es *El Bonium* o *Libro de los bocados de oro*, versión alfonsina de la obra de Mubāššir, probablemente hecha directamente sobre el texto árabe con alteraciones derivadas de la traducción latina del siglo XII.

²¹ *Conde Lucanor*, II, Introd.

por el "amigo entero" para salvar al del prójimo, detalles simbólicos que faltan en la *Disciplina* y que ya hemos visto proceden del *Barlaam* a través de Vitry y otras colecciones de sermones. Es significativo que en la *Disciplina*, libre del prurito alegórico cristiano ajena a las fuentes árabes, la idea de dar la vida por un amigo es sugerida, pero Dios impide que llegue a consumarse.

Como señala María Rosa Lida, D. Juan Manuel siente evidente simpatía hacia el mundo árabe, que se refleja en la "benévola idealización" del ambiente, de las costumbres y de los reyes árabes, en su respeto y admiración por el talento militar de los moros. Aun la barrera religiosa no le impide citar refranes árabes en sitios tan inapropiados como el tratado sobre la Asunción de la Virgen (pág. 440b). Esta simpatía es el fruto de una larga convivencia tradicional entre españoles cristianos y musulmanes y de la experiencia personal de D. Juan Manuel, en contacto directo con el mundo árabe como hombre de armas y de letras. Su proximidad a la cultura árabe explica la "tendencia castiza a preferir el infiel árabe de sus tierras al infiel grecorromano acatado universalmente por la clerecía medieval, pero demasiado lejano para él en tiempo y en espacio."²² De aquí la tolerancia racial y religiosa que hace a D. Juan Manuel decir que la guerra contra los moros proseguirá hasta que los cristianos hayan recuperado las tierras usurpadas por aquellos, sin mencionar para nada la causa religiosa. La intolerancia religiosa, en la España cristiana medieval, se guardaba para el hereje (contra quien se erige la Inquisición en el siglo XIII), mientras que el moro era "un rival político que había que vencer y no un enemigo religioso que hubiese que destruir."²³

Más típico de la literatura árabe que de la cristiana medieval es el elemento personal y autobiográfico que resulta tan aparente en D. Juan Manuel. Cuando la literatura occidental era esencialmente anónima y colectiva, dedicada sobre todo al género épico y didáctico, los árabes cultivaban formas personales de literatura en el sufismo, el lirismo y el autobiografismo. Con D. Juan Manuel y Juan Ruiz irrumpe en la literatura medieval española este sentimiento del yo con un estilo personal de escribir que era nuevo en la tradición occidental, pero familiar en la islámica. Las formas en que este elemento personalista aparece en nuestro autor son variadas y frecuentes. Abundan las alusiones a sí mismo, a sus propias obras y experiencias personales, mientras que apenas menciona a otros autores. En el *Conde Lucanor*, el autor "se asoma al final de cada ejemplo a dar su señorial vistobueno,"²⁴ disponiendo que sea escrito el apólogo. Incluso cuando se ocupa de asuntos técnicos y objetivos, como en el *Libro de la caza* o en tratados didácticos,

²² Lida, *loc. cit.*, pág. 178.

²³ A. Castro, *España en su historia* (Buenos Aires, 1948), págs. 206, 210.

²⁴ Lida, *loc. cit.*, pág. 176.

logra hacernos sentir su presencia personal de alguna forma. En algunos casos la elección de tema responde al conocimiento personal de un suceso significativo similar al de cierta obra literaria, como la historia del príncipe Johás en el *Libro de los Estados*, coincidente con el caso contemporáneo del heredero de Aragón que renunció al trono para hacerse clérigo.²⁵ En otros casos, el personalismo se muestra en un alto sentido de la honra, expresado en terminos calderonianos al decir que la misma muerte es preferible a "pasar et sofrir deshonra, ca los grandes homes que se mucho prescian et mucho valen son para seer muertos, mas non deshonrados" (pág. 319a). Igualmente exaltado es su orgullo de casta y su orgullo patriótico de castellano (pág. 357b), que pueden considerarse como proyecciones de la individualidad hacia el medio inmediato que la rodea.²⁶

Este fuerte personalismo puede explicar, entre otras cosas, ciertos cambios en los temas que maneja, como el ascético del *Barlaam* que se convierte en "doctrina afirmadora de la sociedad" y en guía práctica de príncipes en el *Libro de los Estados*, a pesar de tener por objetivo inspirador la salvación del alma. Pues, naturalmente, aquello que más atraía a su temperamento era lo que se imponía al fin en sus escritos, aun sin quererlo. Como el ya citado apéndice incongruente que añade al Exemplo XLIX (tan ascético en *Barlaam*) parece llamado a satisfacer las aspiraciones mundanas del señor feudal. En el fondo de esta actitud personalista y, por tanto, de la proyección del yo en la literatura, está lo que Américo Castro ha llamado el "integralismo existencial," que se siente a sí mismo y a su circunstancia vital "con todo su ser,"²⁷ y que caracteriza tanto la literatura árabe como la castellana que surge tras largo contacto entre ambos pueblos de la península.

El sentido fatalista de la vida que para el musulmán emana de la efectiva y literal omnipresencia divina, y que sigue tan arraigado en el antiguo Andalus, halla también expresión en el Exemplo XVIII sobre Pero Meléndez Valdés y su dicho habitual "lo que Dios faze, esto es lo mejor."²⁸ Otra consecuencia del mismo providencialismo árabe es la idea de que a Dios se puede servir en todos los estados de este mundo para salvarse. Ello implica que el ascetismo como renuncia al mundo no representa para el árabe, como para el hindú y el cristiano medieval, el único medio seguro de alcanzar la gloria, aunque el musulmán admira siempre y rinde homenaje, por lo menos verbal, al ideal ascético y contemplativo. Y esto es exactamente lo que hace D. Juan Manuel: transforma el ascético *Barlaam* en guía

²⁵ Véase A. Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel* (Zaragoza, 1932), pág. 192.

²⁶ Más ejemplos de autobiografía pueden encontrarse en el *Libro de las Armas* y el *Libro infundido*.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, pág. 315.

²⁸ Cf. un equivalente árabe, p. ej., en la *Disciplina Clericalis*, XXVII ("De saecularium instabilitate").

práctica de gobierno; admira a los combativos dominicos más que a los contemplativos franciscanos; sirve a Dios lo mejor que puede para salvarse en la otra vida sin renunciar a nada de lo que tiene en ésta. Ni uno solo de sus apólogos puede llamarse ascético, pues incluso el Exemplo XIV, sobre el "logrero" y Santo Domingo es más una condena de la avaricia que de la riqueza como tal, y es probablemente un tributo personal al santo más que otra cosa.

Sin forzar el paralelismo, no es difícil apreciar tampoco la afinidad intelectual que une a D. Juan Manuel con el pensamiento árabe. Participa del escepticismo racionalista de éste, por ejemplo, en su actitud hacia las artes de magia (Ex. XI, XX), las pseudo-ciencias, como la fisiognomía (Ex. XXIV), las creencias del vulgo (Ex. XXXII). Comparte también el concepto árabe de la filosofía como sabiduría práctica o ética de la conducta humana. Es un saber que se refiere a obrar, más que a conocer, porque como dice Al-Moqaffa en el prólogo del *Calila*: "El saber es como el árbol, e la obra es la fruta; e el sabio non demanda el saber sinon por aprovecharse dél."²⁹ Tal idea parece inspirar toda la obra, siempre didáctica, de D. Juan Manuel, para quien por lo mismo el saber tiene una importancia "vital": "El saber es la cosa porque home más debría facer," dice al comienzo de *El libro infnido*. Y añade, exactamente como hubiera dicho un autor árabe, colocando el *saber* por encima del *haber*: "ca cierto es que el saber puede guardar el haber, et haber non puede guardar el saber." Incluso la supeditación de todo este saber a Dios, de quien todo emana, es formulada inconscientemente en términos idénticos a los del Islam: "saber es Dios et en Dios" (pag. 264a).

Como A. Castro ha mostrado, incluso ciertas nociones religiosas del enemigo musulmán fueron asimiladas por los cristianos españoles y utilizadas como armas psicológicas contra sus inventores. Tal, por ejemplo, el mito de Santiago Matamoros como contrapartida de Mahoma y la "guerra santa" con la palma del martirio para los caídos. D. Juan Manuel también expresa esta idea con palabras muy semejantes a las usadas por autores árabes: "...es de buena ventura si él [el cristiano] muere en defendimiento et ensalzamiento de la santa fe católica; et los que así mueren sin dubda ninguna son sanctos et derechos mártires... et aunque non mueran por armas, si tal vida pasan en la guerra de los moros... la laceria, et los trabajos, et el miedo, et los peligros, et la buena intención, et la buena voluntad, los facen mártires" (*Estados*, pág. 324a).³⁰

Respecto a la forma literaria, el principal elemento estilístico que D. Juan Manuel debe a los árabes es la técnica del "arco lobulado," con una historia que sirve de marco general dentro del cual se insertan,

²⁹ BAE, LI, 12a.

³⁰ Castro, *op. cit.*, págs. 188 y ss., 206.

como arquitos, menores, narraciones subsidiarias para ilustrar los consejos o doctrina moral. Pero mientras que en la literatura india original el elemento religioso y apoloético era el más importante, los árabes resaltaron el lado moral y secular principalmente, en cuya forma pasaron estas narraciones orientales a escritores de occidente como D. Juan Manuel. Como hemos visto, éste usa las dos fórmulas—doctrinal y narrativa—pero tiene el sentido estético de separarlas.

Las observaciones anteriores resultarían unilaterales si no apuntásemos algunos contrastes evidentes que diferencian la obra de D. Juan Manuel de las obras y de las ideas árabes, y que responden al lado cristiano-occidental de su personalidad. (Su madre, no se olvide, era italiana, así como algunos parientes y consejeros que le rodearon.)

La diferencia formal más aparente es la sustitución de la estructura evanescente e informe típica de la literatura árabe, con sus despliegues de fantasía, sus intrincados cruces de motivos, su alternancia de prosa y verso, por una sobria y bien construida organización de historias y temas. El sentido arquitectónico del Oeste, cuya manifestación más genial es el arte gótico, se afirma literariamente en nuestro autor frente al virtuosismo imaginativo del Este. Como hemos observado ya, la estructura se simplifica en D. Juan Manuel omitiendo la inserción de demasiados cuentos subalternos, separando el elemento proverbial del cuerpo narrativo, resaltando el efecto dramático más que el imaginativo o lírico.

Esta austeridad de forma, muy propia del espíritu castellano de D. Juan Manuel, halla su equivalente moral en la omisión deliberada y sintomática de todo motivo erótico en las obras del infante. Su castidad de temas y de expresión es sorprendente si se le compara con contemporáneos suyos como Hita o Boccaccio, y especialmente con los autores árabes que le sirven de precedente. Nada de lo erótico y escatológico que tanto abunda en la tradición árabe³¹ pasa a él. Cuando el tema roza algún deseo carnal, como en el Exemplo L (Saladín y la mujer de su vasallo) lo emplea precisamente con el austero fin de hacer triunfar el *self-control* o "vergüenza" sobre la pasión sexual. Y en los Ejemplos XXXVI, XLVI, únicos que encierran sugerencias impúdicas, el autor mantiene su decoro impecable y hace resaltar la pureza de las víctimas contra las sospechas maliciosas. La explicación de esta castidad de D. Juan Manuel puede hallarse tanto en su austeridad personal y sentido de dignidad, que dominan toda su obra, como en la falta de una tradición erótica fuera del dominio de la "poesía cómico-bufo."³² Sabemos que D. Juan Manuel no era, en la vida real,

³¹ Cf. *Calila*, "De la mujer que se dió a su siervo sin saberlo," "De la mujer que andaba desnuda"; *Disc. Cler.*, Ex. XIII, "De canícula lacrimante," Ex. XI, "De gladio"; *Libro de los engaños*, No. 5, "La espada," No. 9, "El bañero," No. 10, "La perra," No. 23, "La mujer, el clérigo y el fraile."

³² Castro, *op. cit.*, pág. 397.

casto por naturaleza y que tuvo varios hijos ilegítimos. Cuán dura estimaba la abstinencia sexual lo indica la forma de recomendar a su hijo que evite "quanto podierdes" el pecado de la carne, en vez de hacer la prescripción absoluta. Pero fiel a sus altas miras morales y didácticas, D. Juan Manuel miraba lo sexual como "vileza," de la que dice en el *Conde Lucanor* que "tomarían vergüenza en leerle et aun non ternían por muy guardado de torpedat al que lo mandó escribir ..." (pág. 437a). En otras palabras, él se hubiera avergonzado de escribir como Hita o Boccaccio, ofendiendo con obscenidades su refinado espíritu aristocrático.

Probablemente por la misma razón, además de su sentimiento religioso y profundo respeto de las jerarquías sociales, D. Juan Manuel nunca da la nota anticlerical típica de sus contemporáneos, aunque también tenía para ello precedentes en historias como "la mujer, el clérigo y el fraile" del *Libro de los Engannos* o la del "clérigo y la miel" mencionada arriba.

Lo maravilloso y sobrenatural es muy poco frecuente en D. Juan Manuel, también en contraste con la tradición árabe. Esto es así incluso en los asuntos religiosos, donde los milagros hubieran encajado bien. Aparte del milagro de Santo Domingo (Ex. XIV), el *Lucanor* ofrece sólo un caso de aparición personal del diablo (Ex. XLV), y dos en que el diablo actúa a través de un personaje: la beguina del Exemplo XLII y la endemoniada del XL (aunque en este último sería difícil distinguir la voz del diablo de la de un buen predicador). Es lo más probable, como ha mostrado María Rosa Lida,³³ que tales cuentos deban su inserción a la influencia dominica, más que a la inclinación del autor por lo maravilloso. Mientras que no hay ni rastro en él de cuentos tan típicamente orientales como el de la muchacha trasformada en rata (*Calila*, VI) o la fuente mágica (*Engannos*, 8), trata con escepticismo irónico las creencias comunes en las artes ocultas, que naturalmente asocia con el mundo árabe como depositario de los secretos científicos del medievo.

En conclusión: la verdadera influencia oriental en D. Juan Manuel debe buscarse, no tanto en las fuentes literarias que utiliza, más indirecta que directamente, como en el espíritu árabe que en él alienta inconscientemente y que contribuye en parte a integrar su mentalidad. El elemento árabe no reside en factores ajenos recibidos de una cultura extraña y fascinadora, sino en una actitud mental que tiene muchas facetas comunes a cristianos y musulmanes de la España medieval. D. Juan Manuel comparte con los árabes el espíritu de tolerancia y profunda religiosidad, la cual es, sin embargo, compatible con un código de principios mundanos para la vida práctica y pública. A la literatura oriental debe recursos estilísticos como la inserción de cuentos

³³ *Loc. cit.*, págs. 157-158.

dentro de un marco general o *frame-story*, la ilustración de reglas morales por medio de apólogos amenos y populares, el empleo de frases proverbiales y dichos sabios, el elemento autobiográfico. Pero rechaza de esa literatura, sobre todo, la construcción informe, la retórica florida y los vuelos imaginativos entre la realidad y la fantasía, sustituyéndolos por un sobrio sentido de la forma estructural y del desarrollo psicológico que representan su mayor contribución a la creación de la novela occidental.

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SIR THOMAS WYATT'S TRANSLATIONS FROM PETRARCH

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"OF THE Italian poets it was Petrarch whom Wyatt copied most freely. From Petrarch he derived the sonnet and certain conventional sentiments, which, once introduced into English love poetry, formed its staple subject-matter, with certain interruptions and revolts, for about a century and a half." Thus writes Dr. Tillyard.¹ But although critics have been unanimous in pointing out this Petrarchism of Wyatt, the attitude towards it has changed with the centuries. Puttenham in the sixteenth century is still sufficiently close in time to regard the technical advance due partly to the imitation of foreign models as a new and vital achievement, and therefore respects Petrarch's influence. But from the time of Warton onwards, it becomes less esteemed. Thus Warton in his *History of English Poetry* (1778-81) declares that "It was from the capricious and overstrained invention of the Italian poets, that Wyatt was taught to torture the passion of love by prolix and intricate comparisons and unnatural allusions." G. F. Nott in the essay accompanying his edition of Wyatt which appeared in 1816 says that "Wyatt as a poet can lay little claim to originality," and of his sonnets from Petrarch remarks, "Instead of taking such as were true to nature and expressive of simple feeling, he has fixed on those which abound with ingenious subtleties and conceits."

In our own day, the general tendency among critics of Wyatt like Dr. Tillyard, Sir Edmund Chambers, and Professor Kenneth Muir has been to speak less of his historical importance as a technical innovator, and to dwell more on his intrinsic value as a lyric poet. There is some justification for Professor Baldi's comment on this general critical trend in the preface to his study on Wyatt: "se erra, erra in questo senso e per eccesso."²

Quite clearly there are the two elements in Wyatt's poetry, the original and the imitative, the native and the foreign, and to disregard either is in some way to oversimplify his achievement. Both these elements can be clearly seen in his translations and adaptations of Petrarch; and it is surprising, in view of the importance of such poems for any investigation of these two qualities, that there has been no detailed study of them. Occasional references to and comments on individual translations are of course to be found, but there is no

¹ *The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London, 1929).

² *La poesia di Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Florence, 1953).

systematic discussion of the subject. The most extensive modern English comment is given by Miss Foxwell in the notes to her edition of Wyatt; but her remarks are not coordinated, and in any case much of what she says of the Italian aspects of her subject does not inspire confidence. She does, however, perform a most useful service in compiling a list of those poems in which Wyatt is indebted to various Italian writers, including Petrarch. She sees Petrarch's influence in some thirty of Wyatt's poems, about half of which can fairly be described as more or less close translations, while the rest range from partial translations or obvious adaptations to poems containing reminiscences or similarities which are at times rather tenuous and debatable. Professor Baldi adds one Petrarchan source of his own discovery and summarizes the present knowledge of Wyatt's sources in the appendix to his book; but, being concerned, as he says in his preface, only indirectly with the question of English Petrarchism, he does not subject Wyatt's translations of Petrarch to any detailed study beyond commending them as "opera di gran traduttore."³

Wyatt has many Italian creditors; and, while there can be no absolutely certain answer to the tantalizing question whether he perceived the deficiencies of contemporary English poetry to be due to the absence of any recognizable technical criteria in matters of rhythm and meter, and set out deliberately to remedy these deficiencies by study and imitation of foreign masters, the painstaking conscientiousness with which he followed his models makes it reasonable to infer that he did. But whatever doubt there may be as to his intention, there can be none as to the effect of his cult of the Italians. In the then most adult literature in Europe, that of Italy, he found qualities of elegance and technical accomplishment which were quite lacking in the hitherto straggling, uncouth English poetic idiom, and he found those qualities to a pre-eminent degree in the poet most looked up to by the Cinquecento—Petrarch.

The debt is already acknowledged by Puttenham in a well-known passage of *The Arte of English Poesie* where, speaking chiefly of Wyatt and Surrey, he says that "as novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante Arioste and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude & homely maner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile." One might feel perhaps tempted to deny any significant influence to Dante and question that of Ariosto at this stage; but there is no doubt that it was upon Petrarch among the Italians that the gaze of Wyatt was most steadfastly fixed. By selecting him as a model in this great work of creating a new poetic idiom, Wyatt

³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

initiated the most vital phase of Petrarch's influence on English literature.

Of Wyatt's close versions of Petrarch, the majority, just over a dozen, are sonnets, and there is no doubt that those chosen are among the more artificial, elaborate, and conceited in the *Canzoniere*. This may seem surprising, but it is understandable if we bear in mind that it is principally Petrarch's technical brilliance which attracts Wyatt. The sonnet with its demands for clarity, precision, conciseness was a most suitable corrective for the vices of looseness and irregularity then prevalent in English poetry; and, in his admiration for adult technical mastery, it was perfectly natural that Wyatt should be attracted by the elegance and sophistication, the smoothness and technical bravura, that Petrarch displays in the elaborate and "conceited" type of sonnet which abounds in the *Canzoniere*. This technical attraction is clearly reflected in Wyatt's choice of poems for translation. One of these is the sonnet beginning:

Sono animali al mondo di sí altera
Vista che 'n contr' al sol pur si difende...

Some creatures have such strong eyesight that they can endure the full glare of the sun, others avoid the light, while yet others are drawn towards it only to be burnt and consumed by it. To these last unfortunates the poet compares himself in his love for Laura:

E so ben ch' i' vo dietro a quel che m'arde.

Another poem selected is the sonnet beginning:

Mille fiate o dolce mia guerrera,
Per aver co' begli occhi vostri pace,
V'aggio proferto il cor.

The poet has offered Laura his heart, and she has refused it. It no longer belongs to him since he has given it away, neither does it belong to her since she will not deign to accept it, and so Petrarch fears that some harm may befall it in its present displaced position.

The tone and development of these sonnets are intellectual and logical, and in this they are typical of all the poems which Wyatt chooses to translate. They consist quite simply of an intellectual exposition of some psychological situation in terms of a single image, or in the logical working out in detail of some basic conceit. They are far from being among the most impressive sonnets of the *Canzoniere*, but their theme is usually expounded with an economy, clarity, and neatness which quite elude Wyatt in his translations. Occasionally he is guilty of overcompression and consequent obscurity as he tries to follow Petrarch's conciseness, while at others he has to resort to padding. Thus in the first of the two sonnets quoted above, Wyatt's

quatrain describing how some creatures are attracted and consumed by flame reads:

Other rejoyse that se the fyer bright
And wene to play in it as they do pretend,
And fynde the contrary of it that they intend.
Alas, of that sort I may be by right...⁴

The third line here is nothing like so clear with reference to the central conceit as Petrarch's "Provan l'altra virtù, quella che 'ncende," while in the last line, which renders "Lasso el mio loco è 'n quest'ultima schiera," Wyatt's final last two words are simply weak padding used to fill out the line. His translations, in fact, recall the remark of Ben Jonson, who is reported by Drummond of Hawthornden as having "cursed Petrarch for redacting verses to sonnets which, he said, were like that Tirrant's bed, where some who were too short were racked, others too long cut short."

In addition to these faults of obscurity and the use of meaningless padding, another obvious charge which has to be made against these translations of Wyatt is the jerkiness of their rhythm. So uneven are they in this respect that it is frequently difficult to recognize his lines as iambic pentameters, and virtually impossible to read them with any degree of smoothness. Thus his version of "Cesare, poi che 'l traditor d'Egitto," begins:

Caesar, when that the traytor of Egipt
With the'onourable hed did him present,
Covering his gladnes, did represent
Playnt with his teres owteward, as it is writt...⁵

The reader finds himself reduced to the necessity of turning back and counting the syllables. Similarly Wyatt's translation of "Mirando 'l sol de' begli occhi sereno" opens:

Avysing the bright bemes of these fayer Iyes,
Where he is that myn oft moisteth and wassheth,
The werid mynde streght from the hert departeth
For to rest in his woroldly paradise...⁶

The translations abound with examples like these of the staggering gait of his iambic pentameters in which he seems to be devoid of any feeling for the stresses. Quite clearly this jerkiness is the product of a deficient technique, and is very different from that other mature and masterful irregularity of meter which, as Dr. Tillyard points out, Wyatt in his better moments is capable of using in order to produce certain artistic effects. Wyatt, in the sonnet, does not attain any such mastery, and striking evidence of the difficulty which he experienced

⁴ *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London, 1949), p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

in handling the form can be found by comparing his sonnet "The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbar" with Surrey's "Love that doth raine and live within my thought." Both are versions of Petrarch's "Amor che nel pensier mio vive e regna," but in clarity and smoothness the advantage undoubtedly rests with Surrey.

Perhaps Wyatt's inexpert manipulation of the ten-syllabled line appears most glaring in a longer poem like "Myne olde dere En'mye, my froward master," which is a translation into seven-lined stanzas of the canzone "Quell'antiquo mio dolce empio signore." For the most part the version is faithful to the original, though lines 92-125 are freer and contain considerable amplification. The first stanza reads:

Myne olde dere En'mye, my froward master,
Afore that Quene, I caused to be acited;
Whiche holdeth the divine parte of nature:
That, lyke as goolde, in fyre he mought be tryed
Charged with dolour, theare I me presented
With horrible feare, as one that greatlye dredith
A wrongfull death, and iustice alwaye seekethe.⁷

Again the same uncertainty of stress, and this, extended over 147 lines, makes the reading of the poem an exhausting business. Occasionally amidst a welter of stumbling iambics one comes across an alien but recognizable rhythm such as 'He hath made me regarde god muche lesse than I ought,' but the effect of such intrusion is ludicrous and certainly not the result of deliberate contrivance. The poem has moments of pleasing vigor and directness, especially in couplets like

And towerd honor I quickened his wit,
Where els, as a daskard, he myght have sitt.

(Salito in qualche fama
Solo per me, che 'l suo intelletto alzai
Ov' alzato per sé non fora mai.)

or

Suche vertues he lerned in my great schole,
Whereof he repenteth, the ignoraunt ffole.

(Per quel ch'elli imparò ne la mia scola
E da colei che fu nel mondo sola.)

But the chief impression which the poem leaves is of a stumbling, staggering rhythm which has not yet found its way. The other of Petrarch's canzoni which Wyatt translates closely is

Sì è debile il filo a cui s'attene
La gravosa mia vita . . .

This becomes "So feeble is the thread . . ." and Wyatt here abandons the iambic pentameter for poulter's measure, and feels more at his ease

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

in it. This rhymed couplet of alexandrine and fourteenner is a tedious combination with its eternal rolling motion, but Wyatt does at least avoid in it the stagger of the sonnets.

So far we have seen only the weaknesses of his translations from Petrarch; but there is a certain amount to be written on the credit side too. Quite often a pleasing melody makes itself heard, as in the final couplet of his version of "*Mille fiate o dolce mia guerrera*" which we have already seen. Petrarch's comment on the harm which his heart might suffer is:

Che grave colpa fia d'ambeduo noi;
E tanto più di voi, quanto più v'ama.

Wyatt's final couplet reads:

So shall it be great hurt unto us twayn,
And yours the losse and myn the dedly pain.⁸

This owes something to another line of Petrarch's, "*Vostro, donna, il peccato, e mio fia 'l danno*," but Wyatt's fusion of the two makes his couplet at once poignant and musical. The two lines stand out from the rest of the sonnet; this is interesting, for it is symptomatic of the way in which in England the final couplet comes to dominate the whole sonnet. There is in fact a rare form of rhyme scheme in the sestet even in Petrarch which permits the final two lines to rhyme together; but in England the final rhyming couplet was at once seized on as the high spot of the composition as here in this sonnet of Wyatt, and soon there appeared alongside the form having two quatrains and a sestet the Shakespearean form consisting of three quatrains plus a final couplet. Wyatt virtually invented this form; and in view of this it is of interest to note among these sonnet translations one in particular which might well produce a conception of the sonnet as leading up to a final couplet. It is his "*Yf amours faith, an hert unfayned*," which reproduces Petrarch's "*S'una fede amorosa, un cor non finto*." This is again one of the ingenious and logically contrived sonnets of Petrarch, in which the poet for twelve lines lists some of his symptoms as a series of "if's," and then gives the conclusion in the last two. The whole sonnet leans heavily on these last two lines, and Wyatt, in translating them, keeps close to his original. Petrarch concludes:

S'arder da lunge et agghiacciar da presso
Son le cagion ch'amando i' mi distempre;
Vostro, donna, il peccato, e mio fia 'l danno.

Wyatt's final couplet is:

Ar cause that by love my selff I destroye,
Yours is the fault and myn the great annoye.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

That the argument of this sonnet was to Wyatt's liking is shown by the fact that he uses it again in his "If waker care . . ."

But it is not only in the occasional melody of a couplet that this native power of Wyatt compares favorably with the Italian original. Frequently when Petrarch is being a little mannered and literary, Wyatt contributes welcome freshness and vigor. Compare with its original, for instance, Wyatt's version of the second quatrain of the sonnet beginning "Mie venture al venir son tarde e pigre." In Petrarch the lines are:

Lasso! le nevi fien tepide e nigre,
E 'l mar senz'onda, e per l'alpe ogni pesce,
E corcherassi 'l sol là oltra ond'esce
D'un medesimo fonte Eufrate e Tigre.

This is not particularly impressive, especially with the long circumlocution of describing the East as "the place where the Euphrates and Tigris rise from their joint source," and Wyatt is not afraid to introduce modifications in an attempt to revivify the original:

Alas, the snow shalbe black and scalding;
The See waterles; fisshe in the mountain;
The Tamys shall retorne back into his fontain;
And where he rose the sonne shall take lodging.⁹

The removal of the not very striking circumlocution already referred to and the substitution of more vigorous for feeble terms make Wyatt's quatrain fresher and more incisive than the rather tired original.¹⁰ The best of these more or less literal translations, however, and the one which most clearly shows Wyatt bringing a vivid and realistic touch to the process of translation is the sonnet, "My galy charged with forgetfulness," which is Petrarch's "Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio." The poet likens himself in his passion to a ship caught in a storm and unable to reach the port. Wyatt begins

My galy charged with forgetfulness
Thorrough sharpe sees in wynter nyghtes doeth pas
Twene Rock and Rock; and eke myn ennemy, Alas,
That is my lorde, sterith with cruelnes.

"Sharpe sees" is good for "aspro mare," while the realistic "Twene Rock and Rock" is more direct and impressive than Petrarch's literary "fra Scilla e Cariddi." The sestet too, though not a model of smoothness, is a good example of vivid use of words in describing a scene:

A rayn of teris, a clowde of derk disdain,
Hath done the wered cordes great hinderaunce;
Wrethed with errour and eke with ignoraunce.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Since writing this passage, I have found that Professor Baldi quotes the same example to illustrate Wyatt's skill as a translator. I have retained it because it is a judgment arrived at independently.

The starres be hid that led me to this pain;
 Drowned is reason that should me consort,
 And I remain dispering of the port.

The fourth line can be held to give the meaning of Petrarch's conceited "*Celansi i duo miei dolci usati segni*," but Wyatt here has clearly transcended the conceit, and created a great line of poetry. This process is characteristic of his better moments as a translator. Petrarch, in this kind of sonnet, is concerned chiefly with expounding conceits; but from time to time Wyatt shows himself to be sensitive to the dramatic and realistic potentialities of the image expounded, and then his version can assume, as here, a vitality not to be found in the original.

But, in spite of their occasional bursts of vividness or original melody, it is not to such close translations that we must look for the best of Wyatt's poems immediately inspired by Petrarch; for, even in the most successful of them, the prevailing spirit is one of dogged determination to overcome technical difficulty. Instead we should look to poems written in those meters traditionally English of which Wyatt was confidently master—the short-lined stanzas of the ballets. There are two such examples, "*Perdye I saide yt not*" and "*O goodely hand*," which derive respectively from the canzone "*S'i'l dissi*" and the sonnet "*O bella man che mi destringi 'l core*." Petrarch's canzone is technically extremely accomplished, because of the ease with which the poet handles his complicated rhyme scheme. Throughout the whole poem he employs only three rhymes, which recur in each stanza, altering their positions according to a recognizable pattern after every second stanza. This complex metrical system corresponds admirably to the unified argument of the poem, and the final impression left on the reader is one of admiration for an exquisite and complicated example of literary craftsmanship. From this highly wrought original Wyatt creates a poem quite different in spirit, one which depends for its aesthetic effect not on technical intricacy but on extreme simplicity. The regular lilt of his six-syllabled line, the simple rhyme scheme, and the almost completely monosyllabic simplicity of his diction make his poem a charming song which captivates by its lightness and grace.

Perdye I saide yt not
 Nor never thought to do,
 As well as I ye wott
 I have no powre thereto;
 And if I ded, the lott
 That first ded me enchainē
 Do never slake the knott
 But strait it to my payne.

This is quite different from the sophistication of Petrarch, and is far removed also from the sweat and toil of the sonnets, where the effort of

hammering out the lines is only too apparent. The song trips along to its conclusion:

And as I have deservid,
 So graunte me nowe my hire;
 Ye kno I never swervid,
 Ye never fownd me lyre.
 For Rachell have I servid,
 (For Lya carid I never)
 And her I have Reservid
 Within my herte for ever.

Wyatt's attitude towards translation here is very different from that displayed in his sonnets. Here he does not aim at near literal translation, but is content to take the general theme of the canzone and recast it in this English form, compressing and simplifying it considerably in the process. Compare for instance Wyatt's final stanza with this original:

Per Rachel ho servito e non per Lia;
 Né con altra saprei
 Viver; e sosterrei,
 Quando 'l ciel ne rappella,
 Girmen con ella in su 'l carro d'Elia.

The same may be said of the relation between "O goodely hand" and "O bella man che mi destringi 'l core," except that Wyatt is even freer here than in "Perdye I saide yt not." In fact only the first three stanzas derive from Petrarch's sonnet (the two quatrains); Wyatt's last two stanzas are quite original, for he completely disregards Petrarch's sophisticated glove theme. There is the same artlessness about the short English line in comparison with the Italian hendecasyllable, the same lilting freshness as in "Perdye I saide yt not." Petrarch's second quatrain is

Di cinque perle oriental colore,
 E sol ne le mie piaghe acerbi e crudi,
 Diti schietti soavi, a tempo ignudi
 Consente or voi, per arricchirmi, Amore.

This occupies Wyatt's second and third stanzas.

O fyngers slight,
 Departed right,
 So long, so small, so rownd;
 Goodely bygone,
 And yet alone
 Most cruell in my wound.
 With Lilis whight
 And Roses bright
 Doth stryve thy color faire;
 Nature did lend
 Eche fyngers ende
 A perle for to repayre.

This is extremely free treatment, so free as almost to merit the title

of a new creation; Wyatt's independence is emphasized by the fact that, whereas Petrarch in his sestet goes on to a sophisticated lament over his lady's glove, the English poet invents his own conclusion:

Consent at last,
Syns that thou hast
My hert in thy demayne,
For service trew
On me to rew
And reche me to love againe.
And if not so,
Then with more woo
Enforce thiself to strayne
This simple hert,
That suffereth smert,
And rid it owte of payne.

With a poem like this we are passing beyond the boundary of translation, and entering the more nebulous realm of literary influences.

From this examination of Wyatt's translations from Petrarch several points of general interest emerge. The first concerns his selection of poems for translation from the *Canzoniere*. None of the outstanding lyrics, outstanding by modern taste that is, find a place, and indeed he seems to have had an eye more to ingenuity of expression than any other quality. One gathers the impression that he was interested not so much in the thing said as in the way of saying—"l'arte del dire parole per rima." The second point concerns Wyatt's treatment of his original. The elegance of Petrarch, the technical brilliance of the sonnets, the easy handling of polished conceits, these were the things which principally attracted Wyatt, and in most of his sonnet versions of Petrarch we see him painstakingly following his originals in a largely unsuccessful attempt to reproduce their adroitness in English. Finally I would suggest that there are two kinds of moment at which he is most effective in these translations and adaptations of Petrarch, moments in which he reaches a state of equilibrium between the native and foreign elements in those compositions. The first occurs in a poem like "My galy charged with forgetfulnes," when, in the midst of his struggles with the complexities of a difficult, unfamiliar verse form, a new sense of drama makes itself felt, and gives fresh life to a conventional image. And the second appears when he takes only the general theme of his original, and reclothes it with a joyous sense of freedom in those native melodies which came most easily and naturally to him.

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THE SOVIET CONTROVERSY OVER PUSHKIN AND WASHINGTON IRVING

JOHN C. FISKE

WASHINGTON IRVING is not today a figure widely known to Soviet readers. There have been few translations of his works in the last thirty-five years, and critics have awarded to him far less attention, favorable or otherwise, than to Cooper, Poe, Whitman, Mark Twain, or a large number of more recent American writers. What interest there has been is shown in the occasional translations of a few of his short stories, especially "Rip Van Winkle," and in the controversy arising from the discovery, in 1933, that Pushkin had undoubtedly borrowed from Irving the subject of "The Golden Cockerel."¹

Irving was translated into Russian as early as 1825,² and by 1830 was widely known to the Russian reading public. In that year *Moskovskij vestnik*, introducing a translation of excerpts from *The Conquest of Granada*, referred to Irving as "one of the most distinguished writers in the United States, notable not so much for the depth and originality of his views as for the richness of his imagination and for a style always pure and colorful." Irving was popular among the Decembrists, and, on the other side of the political fence, the government-sponsored journalist N. Greč spoke of him as his favorite author.

That this interest in Irving should be shared by Pushkin was natural enough. N. A. Polevoj, as early as 1831, noted a relationship between Knickerbocker and Belkin;³ and Pushkin himself once quoted Irving with regard to the "noble savage" in literature.⁴ But it was only a century later that Soviet critics were to unearth evidence of the full extent of Irving's connection with Russia's most honored writer.

Interest in Irving, in Russia as in America, died down after the middle of the nineteenth century; by 1917 he was not a sufficiently prominent figure in the Russian public eye to merit the attention of revolutionary critics. It was only in 1926 that there opened up the line

¹ The material for this study was gathered under a graduate student fellowship at the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, to which the author makes grateful acknowledgement.

² Translation of "The Art of Making Books," by N. A. Polevoj, *Moskovskij telegraf*, 1825. Cited by M. P. Alekseev, in the article, "K istorii sela Gorjuchina," *Puškin, stat'i i materialy* (Odessa, 1926), II, 70-87. Alekseev is also the source for other references in this paragraph.

³ In "Literaturnye pribavlenija k russkomu invalidu," *Moskovskij telegraf*, 1831; cited by A. Akhmatova, in "Poslednjaja skazka Puškina," *Zvezda* (Leningrad, 1933), No. 1, pp. 161-176.

⁴ *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij* (Moscow, 1949), XII, 105.

of speculation that came to link Irving's name with that of Pushkin himself. In that year, in a collection of articles on Pushkin, published in Odessa, there was included a study by M. P. Alekseev "On 'The History of The Village of Gorjuchino.'" ⁵ In the course of his discussion of this unfinished work of Pushkin's Alekseev mentions various Western parallels for the little parody, and finally remarks (p. 77):

However, of all western analogies which might be recalled in this connection, there is one which merits closer examination. I refer to Washington Irving's *History of New York*, a work which won considerable fame in the early years of the nineteenth century, and with which Pushkin was in all probability acquainted.

For ten pages Alekseev goes on with a detailed account of Irving's story, its similarity in original purpose, manner of treatment, and later development to that of Pushkin, and the general resemblance between the characters of Belkin and Knickerbocker. He also cites the large number of translations of Irving in the 1820s and 1830s, as well as various other evidence of Irving's popularity in that period.

Alekseev's discussion is well documented, and he has certainly established some remarkable similarities. He notes that both authors have done much to depict the character of the narrator in the course of the story, and that much of the humor of both "histories" rests on the eccentricities of Belkin and Knickerbocker, who maintain throughout the rather pompous air of serious historians, despite the ridiculous triviality of the matters of which they treat. He notes that both narrators are constantly trying to show their learning by reference to imaginary authorities, and that the appearance and voices of the two are, though not at all points similar, at least similarly described. Finally, he remarks that both stories tend to develop into satirical portraits of contemporary society.

That these details establish a resemblance between the two works one may well admit; but such devices are by no means limited to these two. Many of them are familiar currency of British and French eighteenth-century writing, and one might well be able to establish comparable similarities to the works of such writers as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Swift, Defoe, or, in the nineteenth century, Walter Scott. Quite possibly Pushkin had read the Knickerbocker *History*; but to infer that one work exerted a direct influence over the other is a dangerous course too often followed. Certainly a great wealth of external evidence would be necessary to support such a thesis.

A more conservative approach to the subject is exhibited in an article in the collection, *Pushkin in World Literature*,⁶ published in

⁵ Alekseev, *op. cit.*

⁶ D. Jakubovič, "Predislovie k 'Povestjam Belkina' i povestvovatel'nye priemy Waltera Scotta," in *Pushkin v mirovoj literature, Sbornik statej* (Moscow, 1926), pp. 160-187.

the same year. The article is devoted largely to a comparison of Pushkin's and Scott's devices of mystification through a thoroughly characterized narrator. Irving is mentioned several times, both for his direct connection with Scott and for his employment of similar mystifications. The American's appearance in Russian translation in 1827 is also mentioned, but without the drawing of any inferences.

In 1933 the poet Anna Akhmatova, who had read Alekseev's article and probed further into the possible relationship between Irving and Pushkin, came up with a very interesting discovery.⁷ Comparing Irving's "Legend of The Arabian Astrologer" in *The Alhambra* and Pushkin's "Skazka o zolotom petuške" (Tale of the Golden Cockerel), she found a resemblance that could scarcely be explained as pure coincidence. She could discover no evidence of a common source; and indeed the element of parody in Irving's story, which is done in what that author calls his "Haroun al Rashid style," is in itself a strong indication that the tale is largely, if not entirely, Irving's own invention.⁸

Irving's story, which was published in 1832, is ascribed to Mateo Ximenes, ostensible narrator of many of the tales. It tells of one Aben Habuz, king of Granada, who, wishing to retire after a long career of depredations, finds himself beset by enemies on all sides. To him there comes one Ibrahim, full of the lore of Egypt, who tells of a certain brass cock and ram, who used to warn an ancient king of danger. For Aben Habuz the astrologer offers to make a similar device, a bronze horseman who shall point toward approaching danger. Such a horseman is placed on a tower of the king's palace; and within the tower are placed toy armies, which will come to life to represent approaching armies and can be easily knocked down by the king, thus causing destruction of the armies they represent. The talisman works most effectively, and Habuz enjoys the defeat of his enemies without even the effort of sending armies out to meet them. Ibrahim, who at first sought only a cave as his reward, constantly increases his demand for various luxuries; and Aben Habuz somewhat grudgingly fulfills all his requests.

At last there comes a time when the bronze horseman points, but the armies fail to move. Scouts are sent out, but these find nothing but a beautiful Christian princess, whom they bring home to Habuz. The astrologer warns the king that the maiden may be a sorceress and asks to be given custody of her. This request Habuz refuses. Ibrahim retires in dudgeon to his cave, and the monarch saps his treasury for the entertainment of his beloved until his own people rise up against him. Habuz quells the rebellion, then seeks a way to retire with his princess

⁷ A. Akhmatova, "Poslednjaja skazka Puškina," *Zvezda* (1933), No. 1, pp. 161-176.

⁸ Irving himself tells of a similar legend, which he ascribes to the Moorish historian Al Makkari; Washington Irving, *Representative Selections* (New York, 1934), p. 388, note 75.

to some secluded retreat. Ibrahim offers him a fabulous garden, demanding in return the first beast, with its burden, that shall pass through the gate of that garden. This beast, of course, proves to be the palfrey carrying the princess. When the king seeks to withdraw his promise, Ibrahim, the princess, and the garden all disappear, the talisman ceases to work, and Habuz, again beset by enemies, soon goes to a weary grave.

The tale is as leisurely as most of Irving's writings. It captures, in parody, much of the flavor of *The Arabian Nights*, poking fun at the peaceful though bloodthirsty old king and at the two old greybeards who fall out in rivalry over the charms of the Christian princess. Pushkin's tale, on the other hand, reduced to the clipped tetrameter usual in his *skazki* (fairy tales), does away entirely with the Moorish background and with much of the detail of Irving's story. Tsar Dadon, the central figure, is king of a vague and unidentifiable land; the astrologer is similarly vague in origin, characterized only by his *saračinskaja šapka* (Saracen cap), mentioned once in the course of the tale. The princess is called *šamakhanskaja*, an epithet which puzzles even Russian scholars. The talisman has become a golden cockerel, who flies from his pinnacle and destroys Dadon when Dadon kills the astrologer for demanding the princess as his sole gift. The fabulous garden, the cave, and the toy soldiers are absent from Pushkin's tale. Additions consist chiefly in the incident of the tsar's two sons, who go out to fight and are mysteriously killed on the occasion when the princess is discovered. There are also a few slyly derogatory remarks about kings in general, which were pounced upon by the censors of Nicholas I.

The differences I have listed are sufficient to show that there can be no question of plagiarism on the part of Pushkin. His tale, complete with moral couplet at the end, is an entirely different work of art. But it is equally obvious that Irving's prose provided the source material for Pushkin's verse. The king, the astrologer, the talisman, the mysterious foreign princess as the source of discord, the broken promise, and the vanishing of the maiden, all are repeated in Pushkin's tale. Furthermore, Akhmatova discovered that Pushkin owned a French translation of *The Alhambra*, which he had apparently acquired shortly before he started to work on "The Golden Cockerel." As a final and most convincing piece of evidence, Akhmatova calls attention to a Pushkin fragment of 1833, the year before the publication of "The Golden Cockerel," which very closely reproduces Irving's description of the astrologer's little model armies.⁹ Akhmatova notes further that an early Russian review of *The Alhambra* calls special attention to "The Arabian Astrologer"; and that Prince D. I. Dolgorukov, or

⁹ This fragment appears in *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, ed. J. G. Oksman and M. A. Čjavlovskij (Moscow-Leningrad, 1936), II, 116.

Dolgorukij, who was a good friend of Irving in Spain and checked some of his manuscripts, was also an acquaintance of Pushkin.

Akhmatova's article is not limited to a study of similarities and differences between the two stories. She suggests that Pushkin's tale may have been intended as a veiled reference to his relations with Nicholas I, who, Pushkin believed, had broken promises to him. Pushkin would thus be represented by the astrologer, who in "The Golden Cockerel" is less demanding than in Irving's legend, and is killed by the guilty king, while Irving's astrologer suffers no such fate. Akhmatova also thinks that Pushkin's simplifications have gone so far that characters and motivations are not sufficiently developed, and that Pushkin's work is thus in some ways inferior to Irving's.

In 1936, in the collection of Pushkin's works published in commemoration of the centennial of the poet's death,¹⁰ the fragment about the toy armies is printed, I believe for the first time; and in the notes to "The Golden Cockerel" (II, 564), Akhmatova's article is acknowledged and the resemblances and differences between the two stories are discussed at some length. The editors consider that Akhmatova's suggestions as to the political and autobiographical intent of Pushkin's tale would require further documentation, and take exception to her idea that Irving's work is in any way superior. There is no need to put this down to Soviet chauvinism. Matters of relative merit are always open to argument; and the idea that Pushkin is without fault or flaw is common to many Russians, regardless of political stamp.

B. Tomaševskij, who in the same year edited a one-volume edition of Pushkin's works,¹¹ also acknowledged Irving's legend as the source of Pushkin's tale, but stressed the extent to which Pushkin had departed from the original. And in 1938 the folklorist M. K. Azadovskij,¹² discussing the sources of Pushkin's tales, states that Akhmatova has "irrefutably established" that "The Golden Cockerel" was taken from Irving's tale, though he insists that Pushkin's version is "more dramatic and complex." Much the same view is taken by the French Slavist André Mazon, who, in an article in 1939,¹³ went on to seek other foreign sources for those parts of "The Golden Cockerel" that were not obviously taken from Irving.

After 1939 there appears to have been little mention, in the always voluminous literature on Pushkin, of Akhmatova's discovery; one

¹⁰ *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij* (see note 9).

¹¹ *Sočinenija*, ed. B. Tomaševskij (Leningrad, 1936), p. 845.

¹² M. K. Azadovskij, "Istočniki 'skazok' Pushkina" in his *Literatura i folklor* (Leningrad, 1938), pp. 65-105. This may be a reprint of Azadovskij's article with the same title in *Puškina. Vremennik Puškinskoj kommissii*, No. 1 (1935), pp. 134-163.

¹³ André Mazon, "Le Conte du Coq d'or: Pouchkine, Klingler et Irving," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Jules Legras* (Paris, 1939).

writer, however, calls attention to the fact that one of Pushkin's enemies in 1830 referred to the poet in veiled terms as a producer of "imitations of Walter Scott and Washington Irving."¹⁴

It was not until 1947 that Akhmatova's discovery came under attack. In that year there appeared in *The Literary Gazette* an article by V. Sidel'nikov entitled: "Against Distortion and Servility in Soviet Folklore Study."¹⁵ This article is part of the campaign for *partijnost'* (roughly, party-consciousness) and against "cosmopolitanism" that was born out of the Zhdanov speech of August 1946. The particular interest of the article, so far as Irving is concerned, is the condemnation of Akhmatova's study of fourteen years earlier. Akhmatova, one of the Acmeist poets of the preceding generation, had within the last decade come out of a sort of literary retirement, only to have her verse savagely attacked by Zhdanov in 1946. Thenceforth she was fair game for any critic. But Sidel'nikov's article is not limited to a personal condemnation. He makes no attempt to refute her discovery but he inveighs against her for suggesting that Pushkin's work was in any way inferior to Irving's, and demands rhetorically whether there could be a clearer example of servility before the foreign. He adds: "The pseudo-scientific, fundamentally vicious 'theory' of Akhmatova was repeated on all sides by the Leningrad folklorist Azadovskij." And, in the course of a general attack on Azadovskij for attempting to tie Pushkin's tales more closely to Western than to Russian tradition, the critic remarks sarcastically that "'The Tale of the Golden Cockerel' turns out to be a reworking of a story of Irving's." The American correspondent Robert Magidoff¹⁶ tells us in this connection that the late Ju. M. Sokolov, elder folklorist whose student Sidel'nikov had been, was also attacked for the same reason.

A *History of American Literature*,¹⁷ published in the same year as Sidel'nikov's article, contains a chapter on Irving by A. A. Elistratova. In the course of placing Irving in relation to world literature, she mentions his friendship with Prince Dolgorukov, as well as Pushkin's apparent interest in his works. In this latter connection Elistratova remarks that "'The Tale of the Golden Cockerel' might be shown to have a relationship with 'The Legend of the Arabian Astrologer' in

¹⁴ G. Gippius, "Puškin v bor'be s Bulgarinym v 1830-1831 gg.," *Puškin. Vremennik Puškinskoj komissii* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1941), VI, 235-255. The remark which Gippius quotes he places in *Syn Otečestva*, No. 16 (Apr. 19, 1830). The exact quotation reads: "Drugoj prijatel' moj, takže dvorjanin prosviščem Rjapuškin, prevoskhodjaščij prodražanijami W. Scotta i W. Irvinga."

¹⁵ V. Sidel'nikov, "Protiv izvraščeniia i nizkopoklonstva v sovetskoj folkloristike," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, (June 29, 1947). Sidel'nikov was himself a former contributor to Azadovskij's *Sovetskij folklor*.

¹⁶ R. Magidoff, *In Anger and Pity* (New York, 1949), p. 152.

¹⁷ *Istorija amerikanskoi literatury* (title page gives English title also), ed. A. I. Starcer (Moscow-Leningrad, 1947).

Irving's *Alhambra*." But she adds that "In Pushkin's hands, however, the plot of Irving's story receives a completely new ironic subtlety." Here she is apparently accepting Akhmatova's theory that Pushkin's tale was aimed at Nicholas I.

The note of caution in Elistratova's remarks is fairly obvious; but it is doubtful if any recognition whatever of the connection between Irving and Pushkin would satisfy such critics as Sidel'nikov. In February 1948 the *History of American Literature* received a very sharp attack from one A. Tarasenkov.¹⁸ His article does not specifically mention the chapter on Irving; but Elistratova's reference to the Irving-Pushkin connection was very probably one of the "mass of errors" which Tarasenkov accuses the editor of committing. Elistratova is herself included in a distinguished list of what Tarasenkov calls "grovelers before the West."

Such attacks may be considered to have a strong political backing; and subsequent treatment of the matter shows that other Soviet literary scholars heeded the warning. A sesquicentennial edition of Pushkin's works, published in 1949,¹⁹ though in other respects very thoroughly annotated, makes no mention of Irving in connection with "The Golden Cockerel" or "The Village of Gorjuchino"; and the fragment which Akhmatova brought to light is entirely omitted.

Thus, apparently, the "Golden Cockerel controversy" has been brought to an end. Any suggestion that revered Russian writings may derive from foreign sources is a sign of "decadent cosmopolitanism" and "groveling before the West."

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¹⁸ A. Tarasenkov, "Kosmopolity ot literaturovedenija," *Novyj Mir* (Moscow, 1948), No. 2, pp. 124-137. The relevant section (IV) is on pp. 131-132.

¹⁹ *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij* (Moscow, 1949).

CHRÉTIEN'S CLIGÉS AND THE OVIDIAN SPIRIT

D. W. ROBERTSON, JR.

THE indebtedness of Chrétien to the poetry of Ovid has long been evident. We know that he translated the *Ars amatoria* and the story of Philomela from the *Metamorphoses*, and what he says at the beginning of *Cligés* may imply that he also translated the *Remedia amoris* and the story of Tantalus and Pelops. F. E. Guyer has demonstrated that there are numerous reflections of Ovid's poetry in *Cligés*, *Lancelot*, and *Yvain*, and that the conception of love in these romances owes much to Ovid.¹ We have recently been reminded in an essay by Jessie Crossland that imitation of Ovid played a large part in the development of love poetry from the time of Charlemagne to the sixteenth century,² so that Chrétien's indebtedness to Ovid is only what we should expect of a poet who wrote of love during a period which has been called the "Age of Ovid." There were other influences at work in Chrétien's poetry, some of them more important than the Ovidian influence, but a more definite conception of what Ovid meant to Chrétien should be at least of some help in the interpretation of his work. In the present paper I wish to suggest some of the problems involved in formulating a conception of this kind. If Chrétien and his contemporaries were guilty of basing conclusions on "Ovid misunderstood," as some have alleged, we should at least try to discover just how Ovid was "misunderstood."

The "Ovidian spirit," a term which I shall use to designate the wider implications of Ovid's attitudes and literary techniques, has not been by any means uniformly conceived in modern times. That is, there is still no very clear distinction between "Ovid understood" and "Ovid misunderstood." As one scholar who was dissatisfied with certain traditional attitudes toward Ovid put it, "Ovid died, for at least the third time, in the nineteenth century, and was buried deep under mountains of disparaging comment to make a throne for Virgil."³ A mild example of this disparagement in a commonplace form may be found by consulting S. G. Owen's article in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (s.v. "Ovid") where it is said that the *Ars*

¹ "The Influence of Ovid on Chretien de Troyes," *Romanic Review*, XII (1921), 97-134, 216-247.

² "Ovid's Contribution to 'L'Amour courtois,'" *MLR*, XLII (1947), 199-206.

³ T. F. Higham, "Ovid: Some Aspects of his Character and Aims," *Classical Review*, XLVIII (1934), 105. A notable contribution to the reinstatement of Ovid as a poet is the essay by A. G. Lee, "Ovid's Lucretia," *Greece and Rome*, XXII (1953), 107-118.

amatoria is "perhaps the most immoral work ever written by a man of genius." Ovid is accused of being sensual, superficial, and unconcerned with serious ideas. On the other hand, E. K. Rand, in a memorable essay called "Ovid and the Spirit of Metamorphosis," insisted that "there is no pruriency" in the *Ars amatoria*. For Rand, Ovid was primarily a satirist. Referring to the *Ars*, he said that Ovid "left it for those who could detect his satire to find . . . that ridicule is the most potent enemy of love."⁴ Since the poet was not prurient, in spite of his immoral material, "the Puritans of Ovid's day drew one false conclusion from his works and the entourage of Julia drew another." If Ovid was a satirist, he must have had some sort of standard of values to use as a basis for his satire. Rand did not elaborate this point, but in a recent book called *Ovid: A Poet between Two Worlds* Hermann Fränkel contends that Ovid looked forward, at least emotionally, to the new world of Christianity.⁵ For Fränkel Ovid's standard of values is more a matter of poetic feeling than of concrete doctrine, but he nevertheless makes it clear that such a standard exists. There is obviously a difference between the "Ovidian spirit" as seen by Owen and that envisaged by Rand or Fränkel, both of whom find serious undertones in Ovid's poetry. Our own predispositions in this respect necessarily affect our opinion of the kind of enterprise Chrétien was engaged in when he translated the *Ars amatoria* or when he made use of Ovid's poetry in his romances.

The kind of opposition that exists between Owen's "Ovidian spirit"

⁴ *Harvard Essays on Classical Subjects* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 229.

⁵ Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945. In one sense resemblances between Ovid's paganism and Christianity indicate only that he was a man of his age. Commenting on the history of ideas of immortality, Cumont observes (*After Life in Roman Paganism*, New Haven, 1922, p. 1): "These ideas became more and more like the conceptions familiar to us as gradually their time grows later, and those generally admitted at the end of paganism are analogous to the doctrines accepted throughout the Middle Ages." That Ovid was influenced strongly by such ideas, especially as they appeared in Neo-Pythagorean contexts, has been shown by A. Rostagni, *Il verbo di Pitagora* (Turin, 1924), especially pp. 248 ff. Although it is usually said that the Pythagorean discourse in *Met.*, XV is a kind of afterthought, recent evidence tends to show similar influences at work in Ovid's earlier poetry. For example, J. Carcopino, *La Basilique pythagoricienne de la Porte Majeure* (Paris, 1944), especially pp. 377-383, has shown striking resemblances between details of a stucco relief in the apse of a Neo-Pythagorean church and *Her.*, XV. Ovid was a careful student of the poetry of Virgil, whose Neo-Pythagorean tendencies have been brilliantly demonstrated in Carcopino's *Virgile et le mystère de la IV^e églogue* (Paris, 1943). See further Clemens Haselhaus, "Metamorphose-Dichtungen und Metamorphose-Anschauungen," *Euphorion*, XLVIII (1953), 124. Some notion of Neo-Pythagorean ideas may be obtained by consulting the documents collected by Louis Legrand, *Publius Nigidius Figulus* (Paris, 1931). We may add that Ovid seems to have thought highly of Asclepius (*Met.*, XV, 626 ff.), whose cult resembled Christianity in many ways and consequently caused more difficulty to early Christians than that of any other classical deity. See E. J. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius* (Baltimore, 1945), especially II, 132-138. It is possible that some day Ovid may be recognized as something of a philosopher.

and Rand's "Ovidian spirit" is at least as old as the early fifteenth century, and probably as old as the poetry of Ovid itself. Jean Gerson, famous for his attack on the *Roman de la rose*, and for his reforming zeal in other directions, recommended to his confessors that all copies of Ovid should be burned, condemning his poetry as a dangerous stimulus to lechery.⁶ At about the same time Coluccio Salutati was defending Ovid on much the same grounds that Rand later used. Salutati thought that the *Amores* was an attack on vicious love, and that in the *Ars amatoria* Ovid's precepts show beneath the surface the evils of love's service to the end that it may be avoided.⁷ In other words, Salutati thought that Ovid actually condemned love when he seemed to praise it; and we should not forget that to praise something when one means to condemn it is, according to a standard mediaeval definition, to use irony.⁸ I suspect that Gerson and Salutati represent two fairly common mediaeval traditions. There have always been persons with a strong reforming spirit to whom the poetry of Ovid has been unacceptable. An atmosphere of reform grew more pronounced toward the end of the Middle Ages, especially under the influence of the friars, who were inclined to distrust all but the most obviously devotional or moralistic poetry.⁹ Needless to say, Chrétien was not a reformer, and it is possible that his attitude toward Ovid resembled that of Rand and Salutati rather than that of Owen and Gerson.

It is undeniably true that extensive use of Ovid was made throughout the Middle Ages by persons of unquestionable piety who were, at the same time, not in any sense puritans. Thus Theodulf of Orléans observed that, although Ovid and Virgil may be frivolous on the surface, many truths lie hidden in their works.¹⁰ We should notice here the perception of a difference between the surface and the underlying meaning of Ovid's poetry which was also evident to Rand and to Salutati. Jessie Crossland writes that "the prurient nature" of Ovid's poetry, which she takes for granted, "does not seem to have shocked serious authors of the Carolingian period, who frequently incorporated passages from the *Ars amatoria* or the *Remedia amoris* into their

⁶ *Opera* (Hagae Comitum, 1728), III, 923. Gerson quotes Ovid as an authority against lechery in the very sermon in which the condemnation occurs.

⁷ *De laboribus Herculis*, ed. B. L. Ullman (Zürich, 1951), I, 69.

⁸ See Isidore, *Etymologiae*, II, xxi, 41.

⁹ Mussato, Boccaccio, and Salutati were all forced to defend their admiration for poetry against attacks by friars. Franciscans were generally opposed to secular learning, although there were exceptions. Some Dominicans, influenced by St. Thomas, *Summa theol.*, I.1.9 ad 1; I-2. 101. 2 ad 2, denied the utility of poetry.

¹⁰ *MGH, Poetae*, I, 543. For bibliographies covering Ovid's mediaeval reputation generally, see E. Martini, *Einleitung zu Ovid* (Brunn, 1933), pp. 92-96; and F. Lenz, "Ovid. 1928-1937," in *Bursian's Jahresbericht*, No. 264 (1939), pp. 120-126. A useful survey is that by Otto Gruppe, *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, a supplement to Roscher's *Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1921), pp. 1-35.

didactic and moral works."¹¹ She goes on to point out that Alcuin used the *Ars amatoria* in his *Præcepta vivendi* along with quotations from Virgil, Horace, and the Old and New Testaments. Ovid influenced the poetry of Rabanus Maurus, who was obviously not interested in the cultivation of pruriency. Perhaps these writers were not shocked because they were able to observe useful truths beneath Ovid's surface immorality. In the twelfth century we may notice a parallel situation in the works of writers like John of Salisbury and Alanus de Insulis; in fact, Ovid became well enough acclimated to be quoted in scriptural commentaries, like that of Thomas the Cistercian on the Canticum (*PL*, CCVI, 9-862). Evidence of this kind, of which a great deal could be adduced, tends to confirm the notion that the attitude expressed by *Salutati* represents an early and important mediaeval tradition.

We may well inquire concerning the nature of Ovid's appeal to serious authors in the Middle Ages. Certain incidental attractions occur to us at once, such as the parallels between the first book of the *Metamorphoses* and the Book of Genesis. Ovid is also full of wise saws and well-turned phrases on a wide variety of subjects. But, if we assume that the general attitude expressed by *Salutati* and *Rand* had some currency, there may have been also something attractive to mediaeval Christians in Ovid's theory of love. At the opening of the fourth book of the *Fasti*, Venus is invoked as the "mother of the twin loves." After the invocation Ovid refers in a jocular way to his earlier books on love, but indicates that his new project in the *Fasti* is more serious. Here Venus is described as a cosmic force which governs the earth, the sea, and the heavens, causes plants and animals to perpetuate their species, inspires the arts among men, and, as Venus Verticordia, preserves the chastity of wives. These activities are very different from those of the "mother of tender loves" who presides over the *Amores* and the *Ars amatoria*. The love described in these earlier works, although equally the product or "son" of Venus, has little to do with chastity. The observations of an anonymous eleventh-century commentator on the *Fasti* are thus not entirely fantastic:

There are two Venuses, one chaste and modest who leads the way in virtuous loves... the other a voluptuous goddess of unlawful passion... There are thus two loves, one good and modest... the other shameless and evil. It is to be noted that there is one Venus literally called 'Genetrix' by the Romans who is considered by Ovid to be the mother of both loves.¹²

The same description is used by Albericus of London (*Myth. Vat.*, III, 18) who attributes it to Remigius, so that it may have been as old as the ninth century. When Bernard Silvestris, commenting on Virgil, wrote of two Venuses, one of which represents "natural justice" or

¹¹ Page 199.

¹² See E. H. Alton, "The Mediaeval Commentators on Ovid's *Fasti*," *Hermathena*, XLIV (1926), 136.

"mundana musica" and the other of which is the "mother of all fornication,"¹³ he may not have been departing very far from one possible conception of the "Ovidian spirit."

The idea that there are two loves, one reflecting the harmony of created nature, and the other shameful, reprehensible, or ridiculous, was not unfamiliar in a purely Christian frame of reference during the twelfth century. It was held that good and evil are fundamentally matters of love, and that love springs like a fountain within the human breast which may turn either in the stream of charity, a love which is the source of all good, or in the stream of cupidity, a love which is the source of all evil.¹⁴ The good love was said to be harmonious with the force which preserves the order in nature and makes nature fruitful, and this love was abandoned by man for the evil love in the Fall.¹⁵ It is not, therefore, surprising that John the Scot, writing of the evil Venus, should identify her with original sin,¹⁶ that is, with concupiscence of the flesh taken in a general rather than in a specific sense. Concupiscence was the "mother of all fornication" both physical and spiritual, but at the same time necessary so that fallen man, who could no longer reproduce himself reasonably, might perpetuate his race. There was thus an obvious parallel between the Ovidian concept of "twin loves" and the Christian concept of two opposing loves. Although we may not agree with what he says, we may perhaps see a certain historical reasonableness in the assertion of Arnulf of Orléans in the twelfth century to the effect that in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid set out to condemn irrational love, or the immoderate love of temporal things, and to encourage rational love, or love for the creator.¹⁷ Ovid's conception of the creator (*Met.*, I, 20-87) was in some respects very different from that of Arnulf; nevertheless, the Christian commentator could find in the pagan poet surprising anticipations of his own attitude toward the dual nature of love.

In view of the uses made of Ovid's poetry by mediaeval writers and commentators, it seems to me probable that there flourished in the twelfth century, when Ovid achieved widespread popularity, a notion very similar to that expressed by Rand to the effect that ridicule is "the most potent enemy" of the wrong kind of love. Ovid himself spoke of his *Ars* as his book of "jokes" (*Trist.*, II, 237-238) and insisted that the work advocates nothing unlawful. He called himself "tenerorum lusor amorum" (*Trist.*, III, iii, 73; x, 1), a phrase which

¹³ *Comm. super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, ed. Riedel, p. 9.

¹⁴ See the quotations in my article, "The Subject of the *De amore* of Andreas Capellanus," *MP*, L (1953), 149, note 27. The ideas are commonplace and could be identified in various forms in many other sources.

¹⁵ See Ailred of Riveaulx, *De spirituali amicitia*, PL, CXCIV, 667. Cf. the same author's *Speculum charitatis*, *ibid.*, 524-525 and Boethius, *De cons.*, II, met. 8.

¹⁶ *Annotationes in Marcianum*, ed. Lutz, p. 13.

¹⁷ F. Ghisalberti, *Arnolfo d'Orléans* (Milan, 1932), p. 181.

may imply mockery as well as playfulness. If Ovid was thought to condemn cupidinous love in the *Metamorphoses*, moreover, an examination of the text will show that much of this condemnation, or supposed condemnation, involves humor. As Fränkel puts it, "There is no need to say much about the humor in the *Metamorphoses*, because it is one of its most obvious features."¹⁸ With reference to Chrétien, it would be useful to know whether he regarded Ovid as a humorous mocker of a misdirected love which, in the Christian context of his romances, could be associated with cupidity. I do not propose to answer this question here, but to suggest that, if he did think of Ovid in this way, we should perhaps be more sensitive to humorous possibilities in his own work. In support of this suggestion, I wish to consider briefly a few tentative illustrations of Ovidian irony in *Cligès*.

When Cligès "in the flower of his age" (almost fifteen) appears at the court of the Emperor of Germany where he sees Fenice for the first time, Chrétien pauses to describe his beauty. He says that the boy is fairer than Narcissus, who died because he fell in love with his own image in a fountain and could not consummate this love—and also wiser. As Guyer points out, this passage is unmistakably a reference to the story of Narcissus in the *Metamorphoses*, a story which has certain very obvious connotations. Fränkel has this to say of it:

The Ovid of the *Metamorphoses* is far from composing parables or preaching sermons; he merely tells fascinating stories; and yet, in so doing, he furnishes material for many a sermon. The mediaeval *Ovide moralisé* is mostly inept, but the idea was not so preposterous as it seems. The words in which Ovid expresses Narcissus' fatal predicament lead very close to a profound truth. Self-love is headed for destruction. Its thirst can never be quenched...¹⁹

He goes on to say that Narcissus was changed into a flower "as fine and proud, as single and useless as he used to be." In the twelfth century Arnulf of Orléans says of the same story, "Narcissus is said to have loved his shadow, because he put his own excellence above all other things... He was changed into a flower, that is, into a useless thing..."²⁰ On the general implications of the Narcissus story the twelfth century and the twentieth are thus in agreement. Having made his point about Narcissus "in the flower of his age," Chrétien shows his two young protagonists making eyes at each other, each falling hopelessly in love with the other's beauty, so that, without speaking, they come to have a common desire. In this sense their hearts are merged in one, a quaint device, we may observe, which arranges matters so that each in effect loves himself. Perhaps Chrétien intended his lovers to look a little foolish and reinforced this intention by referring to Narcissus.

¹⁸ Ovid, p. 85; see also the very discerning note, p. 215.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

²⁰ Ghisalberti, p. 209.

Cligés and Fenice manage to avoid Narcissus' untimely end partly through the offices of an enchantress named Thessala. She claims to know more of charms and witchcraft than Medea, who was born in Thessaly, a country noted in Ovid, Lucan, and elsewhere for the practice of witchcraft. The comparison with Medea is not very propitious and certainly does not suggest that Thessala is a person whose enterprises may be considered to be at all virtuous. In *Heroides*, XII Medea confesses that her witchcraft can subdue dragons and wild bulls, but not her own passion. And in the *Metamorphoses* this passion is admittedly something contrary to justice, piety, and modesty (VII, 72).²¹ The crimes to which love and witchcraft lead Medea are remembered once more in the *Tristia* (III, ix), where Ovid uses the story of how Medea murdered and dismembered her brother to contribute to the unwholesome atmosphere of his place of exile. If Cligés is like Narcissus, and Thessala, who helps him, is like Medea, Chrétien cannot have regarded their activities in a very favorable light. Among the specific devices Thessala uses is a potion or philter; as Fränkel points out, such means were repugnant to Ovid, who condemned them repeatedly.²² Again, at one point in the story, Cligés suggests that Fenice leave her husband and go with him to Britain, where she will be received, he says, more joyfully than Helen was received at Troy when Paris took her there. As Guyer suggests, this passage probably reflects Paris' courtship of Helen as pictured in the *Heroides* (XVI, 175). That the wooing of Helen was ill-fated and not very wise is sufficiently clear; but Ovid emphasizes this fact in the same epistle by making Paris assure his lady that she need not fear the warfare of the Greeks, who will not pursue them. And even if the Greeks are aroused, Paris says, he is a man of great power and deadly weapons. In this instance common knowledge of the outcome of Paris' enterprise provides the background for Ovid's irony. Meanwhile, the suggestion that Cligés is like Paris, famous for his bad judgment (cf. Horace, *Epist.*, II, ii, 10-11), and that Fenice is like Helen, whose beauty leads only to misfortunes which she herself laments in the fifteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* (232-233), is not auspicious for our protagonists.

In his article on Chrétien and Ovid, Guyer demonstrates that Ovidian ideas characterize both Alexander's courtship of Soredamors and Cligés' courtship of Fenice.²³ Love is a tyrannical power which tortures lovers, burns them, causes paleness, trembling, lack of appetite, sleeplessness, mental derangement, and so on. Although we are usually

²¹ We should notice that the loss of these virtues characterizes the beginning of the iron age, *Met.*, I, 127-150, where justice is represented by Astrea, the Virgo of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue. It is thus probable that Ovid regarded these virtues rather highly.

²² *Ovid*, pp. 62 and 203, note 27.

²³ See the list of Ovidian characteristics on pp. 124-125.

urged to accept these things as "conventions" without any particular meaning, if Professor Rand's general attitude was correct they are a part of Ovid's design to make love ridiculous.²⁴ Chrétien does not lend them any greater dignity by adding yawning and sweating to the symptoms of lovesickness—the second of which Chaucer was to use for humorous effect in his picture of "joly Absolon." One of the most prominent features of love in Cligés is that it begins with the eyes. Thus Soredamors complains that she has been betrayed by her eyes; and her debate with herself, as Guyer shows, owes something to the inner debate of Medea, who has almost conquered her passion when the sight of Jason causes it to flare up again. Alexander confesses that he was wounded through the eye. Love's arrow, which he elaborates in such a way as to make it identical with the appearance of Soredamors, has passed through his eye to his heart. In this process it by-passes the understanding. To show how his understanding has been neglected in this process, Chrétien gives us a picture of Alexander in bed embracing and caressing a shirt which contains a strand of Soredamors' hair; at this point Chrétien openly calls him a fool. Again, Cligés and Fenice are, like Narcissus, betrayed by their eyes. It seems likely that Chrétien was just as aware as Ovid was (*De med. fac.*, trans. Mozley, 45-50) that "Love of character is lasting: beauty will be ravaged by age, and the face that charmed will be ploughed by wrinkles . . . Goodness endures and lasts for many a day, and throughout its years love securely rests thereon." We may recall similar ideas in Cicero's *De amicitia*, and that love through the eyes is regarded with disfavor in the Old Testament, where, for example, Holofernes is captured by his eyes when he sees Judith (Jud. 10:17, 16:11). Love through the eyes is a kind of foolishness in both pagan and scriptural contexts, not to mention the context of ordinary common sense.

I do not mean to imply that Chrétien was sermonizing any more than Ovid was sermonizing; but it seems to me that his Ovidian references and "conventions," if we may call them that without emptying them completely of meaning, may have had an ironically humorous effect. If the obvious reflections of Ovid alone pointed in this direction, the evidence would be very tenuous, since it is probably impossible to demonstrate conclusively that Chrétien interpreted Ovid in any special way. But there are other evidences of light mockery in the romances, especially in *Cligés*. For example, Soredamors spends some very anxious moments seated by Alexander's side trying to make up her mind how she should address her prospective lover. She does not know whether to call him by his name or to address him with the word, "Friend." She is afraid that if she calls him "Friend" as she

²⁴ It is noteworthy that some of these "conventions" are listed as disadvantages of love by Albertanus of Brescia, *Dei trattati morali di Albertano da Brescia*, ed. F. Selmi (Bologna, 1873), pp. 211-214.

would like to do she might be telling a lie, since the two have never spoken. On the other hand, his name is so long that she might stumble over it and stop half way through. While she is meditating in stony silence on these awful possibilities, the Queen enters and very casually punctures Soredamors' reverie by addressing Alexander as "Friend." Again, and here the touch is a little more serious, when Cligés promises Fenice that, if she will go to Britain with him, she will be as well received as Helen was in Troy, Fenice replies to the effect that a move of this kind would injure her reputation. No one would then believe that she had never submitted to the embraces of her husband. To support this very virtuous posture she quotes St. Paul, who, she says, advised those who cannot remain chaste to keep themselves free from blame. The humor in this argument arises from the fact that what St. Paul says (I Cor. 7:9) is that "if they do not contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to be burnt." But Fenice has not been using her marriage to avoid being burnt, and there may be some ironic significance in the fact that the plan she proposes on the basis of her scriptural authority results in her being burnt in yet another way. We may add that her resurrection from the ashes suggests another ironic inversion.²⁵ In any event, the authority she cites condemns the very position she seeks to support. At the same time it suggests the solution to love's difficulties which Alexander and Soredamors found on the good advice of the Queen. Serious considerations aside, there seems to me to be a certain humor in the disparity between what Fenice is seeking to justify by her authority and what her authority actually says.

At one point in the story the contrast between charity and cupidity, which, as we have seen, may be thought of as a Christian fulfillment of Ovid's "twin loves," is made explicit, but with a very light touch effected by the introduction of an Ovidian idea. In the course of Fenice's feigned illness, the Emperor who is her husband in name only wishes to bring a physician to examine her. Fenice says that only one physician can cure her and that her life or death is wholly in his hands. The Emperor and his companions think that she means God, as they very well might, since according to a very old convention Christ is regarded as the physician of the soul. But just as Oenone can be helped neither by herbs nor by a god, but only by Paris, and just as Medea cannot cure her malady by witchcraft but only with the help of Jason, Fenice, Chrétien tells us, actually meant Cligés when she mentioned a physician: "He is her god who can cure her and who can cause her to die." This remark reminds us at once of Ovid's lovesick

²⁵ The name Fenice suggests the Phoenix, a traditional symbol of the resurrection of Christ and of the just. See Lactantius' *De ave phenice*, and the study by E. Rapisarda, *Il carne "De ave phenice"* (Catania, 1946). For the twelfth century, see Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* (London, 1863), p. 85.

ladies and of the Christian sin of idolatry. Love for Cligés is set against love for God, or cupidity in the typical form of sexual passion against charity. As a matter of fact, Fenice is not sick at all except for a certain self-induced warmth, and she needs spiritual attention rather than the offices of the learned gentlemen from Salerno. But these ideas are kept from being too serious and heavy-handed by the humorous incongruity between what Fenice is thinking and what the Emperor is thinking; and the humorous level is maintained in the subsequent events, which include the hilarious demise of the physicians at the hands of more than a thousand indignant ladies who have observed Fenice's "martyrdom" through a little crack in a door.

Ironic humor is perhaps one of the chief characteristics of the "Ovidian spirit" as it is viewed by Rand. In a sense the whole second part of *Cligés* develops toward an ironic conclusion. When Fenice first reveals her love for Cligés to Thessala, she describes her aversion to the situation typified by the love of Iseut and Tristran, of whom, she says, many idle tales are told. Again, she tells Cligés that she is not really a wife and that her body belongs to him exclusively, as well as her heart. No one, she maintains self-righteously, will learn to do villainous deeds by her example. Cligés will never be called Tristran nor she Iseut, for their honor would then be lost. On the basis of the same reasoning she refuses to run away with Cligés. If she did, men would say evil things about them and no one would believe that she had kept her body for him alone. As it turns out, the deceptions and lies of the lovers and the charms and craft of Thessala and Jehan serve only to intensify Fenice's evil reputation. For at the very end of the romance we are told solemnly that there has not been an emperor of Greece since the time of the story, who, thinking of how Fenice deceived Alis first with the potion and then with the other ruse of her pretended death, did not fear his wife and keep her under lock and key away from the company of any men except those castrated in youth. I suggest that the references in the story to such characters as Narcissus and Paris, together with the conventions borrowed from Ovidian love poetry, also point toward the fact so eloquently revealed in the conclusion that Fenice and Cligés were a little deluded in their conception of honor.

To return once more to our central problem, the question of the significance of Ovid's influence on Chrétien, it must be admitted that it is possible to interpret Ovid in a number of different ways. If Ovid is essentially a prurient poet, it follows that he must have been misunderstood by a great many mediaeval writers from Alcuin to Salutati. And in that event either Chrétien misunderstood him or was a prurient poet himself. It is true that some of his critics have accused him of having only a superficial conception of morality. On the other hand,

there is some reason for seeing Ovid as a satirist with some feeling for moral standards, a poet whose chief weapons were ridicule and humor. If we see him in this light, his influence on serious mediaeval authors is easier to understand and we have some basis for suspecting irony and humor in less-serious mediaeval vernacular authors who show substantial evidence of his influence. The humor of a distant generation in a society very different from our own is sometimes difficult to detect, and our philological methods are clumsy before a joke. But the conception of Chrétien as a mild satirist has, it seems to me, something to be said for it and is in some ways more consonant with what we know of the twelfth century than the conception sometimes presented to us that he was a slightly immoral romantic sentimentalist.

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AN AMERICAN GEORGIC: WILLA CATHER'S MY ÁNTONIA

CURTIS DAHL

THOUGH the wheat-seeded prairies of Nebraska are far distant from the vineyarded plains of Latium, Willa Cather shows in her novel *My Antonia* that in spiritual significance they are close together. Several critics have pointed out in her work the use of Virgilian references and have ascribed to Virgil's influence her so-called "elegiac" tone;¹ but the fact that her novel is explicitly an American *Georgic* has not been sufficiently emphasized.

On the title page of *My Antonia* appears an epigraph from Virgil's *Georgics*, Book III: "Optima dies . . . prima fugit." Later in the novel (Book III, Chapters I and II) Cather explains her use of the quotation. Jim Burden, the narrator, after a boyhood happily spent on a prairie farm and later in the small town of Black Hawk, Nebraska, has come to the university at Lincoln. There a young New England scholar, Gaston Cleric,² introduces him to the living meaning of Roman and

¹ They have tended to emphasize the nostalgic element in her novels and to term this quality Virgilian without making an adequate distinction between the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. Thus Clifton Fadiman ("The Past Recaptured," *Nation*, CXXXV, Dec. 7, 1932, 563, 565) says of her mental outlook: "Though its roots lie deep in the Nebraska prairies, it is Vergilian in its grace, its aversion to confusion and violence, its piety, its ancestor-worship, its moral idealism, its gentle stoicism, its feeling for the past, and its sense, touching rather than tragic, of the tears which lie in mortal things. There are lines of hers whose grave, simple sentiment and purity of rhythm actually echo the more reflective cadences of the *Aeneid*." He goes on to comment on her "gentle Vergilian heart" and the "quiet emotional power" of her "Vergilian power of reminiscence." Louis Kronenberger ("Willa Cather," *Bookman*, LXXIV, Oct. 1931, 135) writes in the same vein about her novels: "There is something Vergilian about them (it is not for nothing that Miss Cather's fiction is full of Vergilian tags and echoes); Miss Cather, like Vergil, has treated essentially Homeric material, not with straightforward vigour, but with a peculiar nostalgia and humaneness and sense of retrospection, the very overtone of *forsan et haec olim et optima dies . . . prima fugit*." It is perhaps questionable whether even the *Aeneid*, considered as a whole rather than in only its first six books, should be spoken of in quite these terms. John Hinz ("A Lost Lady and 'The Professor's House,'" *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXIX, Jan. 1953, 80) interprets the Virgilian epigraph as "bitter," an adjective that it is difficult to apply to the *Georgics*. Howard Mumford Jones ("Novels of Willa Cather," *Saturday Review of Literature*, XVIII, Aug. 6, 1938, 16) seems nearer the truth when in Cather's novels he notes "a Roman gravity, a sense of the dignity of life." I find it difficult to see, at least in *My Antonia*, the Roman stoicism that Edward A. and Lilian D. Bloom find in the novels ("Willa Cather's Novels of the Frontier: A Study in Thematic Symbolism," *American Literature*, XXI, Mar. 1949, 71-93). For Willa Cather's interpretation of Ovid see *A Lost Lady* (New York, 1938), pp. 76-77, and *The Song of the Lark* (Boston, 1915), pp. 27-28.

² Gaston Cleric is an amalgamation in Willa Cather's mind of two actual people. William Ducker, an Englishman of about sixty well trained in the classics, worked

Greek authors. What impresses Jim most is that in this new world of ideas, in these traditions from far-off Italy and the distant past, he finds "curious survivals" of his own boyhood experiences: "some of the figures of my old life seemed to be waiting for me in the new."³ One March evening he is studying:

I propped my book open and stared listlessly at the page of the 'Georgics' where to-morrow's lesson began. It opened with the melancholy reflection that, in the lives of mortals, the best days are the first to flee. '*Optima dies . . . prima fugit.*' I turned back to the beginning of the third book, which we had read in the class that morning. '*Primus ego in patriam mecum . . . deducam Musas*'; 'for I shall be the first, if I live, to bring the Muse into my country.' Cleric had explained to us that '*patria*' here meant, not a nation or even a province, but the little rural neighborhood on the Mincio where the poet was born.

This was not a boast, but a hope, at once bold and devoutly humble, that he might bring the Muse (but lately come to Italy from her cloudy Grecian mountains), not to the capital, the *palatia Romana*, but to his own little 'country'; to his father's fields, 'sloping down to the river and the old beech trees with broken tops.'

Cleric said that he thought Virgil, when he was dying at Brindisi, must have remembered that passage. After he had faced the bitter fact that he was to leave the 'Aeneid' unfinished, and had decreed that the great canvas, crowded with figures of gods and of men, should be burned rather than survive him unperfected, then his mind must have gone back to the perfect utterance of the 'Georgics,' where the pen was fitted to the matter as the plough is to the furrow; and he must have said to himself, with the thankfulness of a good man, 'I was the first to bring the Muse into my country.'⁴

As Jim Burden thinks back to Cleric's fervent exegesis of the passage and wonders about the "rocky strip of New England coast" which is Cleric's *patria*, a knock comes at the door. It is Lena Lingard, a girl from a poor Norwegian family whom Jim had known in his childhood, when dressed in rags she had watched the cattle on the prairie pastures. Now, beautifully garbed, a prosperous milliner, she brings to the lonely Jim something of the warmth and vitality he had known on his grandfather's farm. Her vibrant laugh calls back to him the deep values of his past rural life, which, in going to the university, he had left behind him:

It came over me, as it had never done before, the relation between girls like those and the poetry of Virgil. If there were no girls like them in the world, there would

in a store in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and was often found reading his Homer or Virgil at the counter. He taught Willa Cather, then a school girl, Greek and Latin and read the classics with her while she was studying at the university; she absorbed his passionate interest (Edith Lewis, *Willa Cather Living*, New York, 1953, pp. 19-22; E. K. Brown, *Willa Cather, A Critical Biography*, completed by Leon Edel, New York, 1953, p. 34). At the University of Nebraska Willa Cather was much influenced by her teacher of creative writing, a tall, thin New Englander Episcopalian named Herbert Bates. With him she had long informal discussions (Mildred R. Bennett, *The World of Willa Cather*, New York, 1951, p. 204).

³ *My Antonia* (Boston, 1949), p. 167.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

be no poetry. I understood that clearly for the first time. This revelation seemed to me inestimably precious. I clung to it as if it might suddenly vanish.

As I sat down to my book at last, my old dream about Lena coming across the harvest-field in her short skirt seemed to me like the memory of an actual experience. It floated before me on the page like a picture, and underneath it stood the mournful line: '*Optima dies . . . prima fugit.*'⁶

In these comments on the third *Georgic* Willa Cather has embodied the basic themes of *My Antonia*. These themes are also important in her other works.

The first of these inextricably fused themes is Cather's desire to celebrate in her novels her own Nebraskan *patria*. She conceives of the cultivated poet Virgil harking back from the magnificent life of the imperial court to the simplicity of life on the Mincio. She thinks of him wishing to praise the locality where he has spent his boyhood. She emphasizes the fact that in the *Georgics* he consciously turns away from trite mythological subjects to find a truer poetry in the creative vitality of life on the land. Though in other novels she feels the power of the *Aeneid*,⁸ here, speaking through Gaston Cleric, she seems to say that Virgil's greatest triumph is in the perfect, realistic artistry of the *Georgics*. All the greatest literary art, she implies, grows directly out of the beautiful fertility of the earth as symbolized in such women as Lena Lingard and Antonia Schimerda. Lena, walking in Jim's vision through the harvest fields of Nebraska, is not only a pagan goddess of fertility but is also the true Muse of poetry.

It is this conception of literature that moulds *My Antonia*. Like Virgil in his *Georgics*, Cather avoids grand and spectacular subjects in order to depict with depth of sympathy and understanding the life in her homeland. In her trilogy of early novels, *O Pioneers!*, *My Antonia*, and *A Lost Lady*, she pictures successive phases of Nebraskan life—the hardship and courage of the first settlers, the hesitation but essential strength of the second generation, the pettiness of later times. *My Antonia* particularly, with its close relationship to Willa Cather's own life,⁷ is an accurate and realistic picture of life on the prairie, but like Virgil's poem it transcends mere local color by emphasizing the eternal beauty of creative life on the rich earth.

According to Cleric's interpretation, in bringing the Muses to Mantua Virgil was doing more than merely describing the region in artistic terms or even seeing the poetry in humble life. Virgil's statement that

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁸ See, for instance, her reference in *Shadows on the Rock* (New York, 1931), pp. 98, 163; *The Professor's House* (New York, 1925), pp. 113, 251-252.

⁷ Lewis, Bennett, Brown, and other biographers agree that much in *My Antonia* is autobiographical. Lewis, for instance, points out that the room in which Gaston Cleric's conversation with Jim takes place, with its map of Rome on the wall, is an actual description of Cather's own room in Lincoln. Cather ranked first in her class in Latin (Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 30). Later she taught English and Latin in Pittsburgh (Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

the Muse is to descend "Aonio . . . vertice" implies for Cather an attempt on Virgil's part to understand his native land in terms of the cultural traditions of the past. Cather makes this transference of cultural tradition one of her major themes. She interprets Virgil in the light of her own desire to bring to the seemingly new land of Nebraska the traditions of the European and American past. Like Gaston Cleric, she wishes to understand Nebraska in the light of the past, and she stresses the depth and variety of cultural traditions that can be found in the apparently callow land. Farmers from the stately homes of Virginia, from the wolf-infested steppes of Russia, from the music-loving villages of Bohemia, turn up with their plows relics of warlike Indian tribes and the rusted swords of roaming Spanish conquistadors. Otto Fuchs contributes his Austrian Christmas tree ornaments. Stories are told of the rough miners and sinewy cowboys of pioneer days. Around the farmers of Nebraska, as around those of Latium, lie memories of the past. Rome and Nebraska are not really far different. Thus, when Jim Burden studies his Virgil, he finds little that is new.⁸

Yet Cather interprets Virgil primarily in terms of human values. The Roman poet, she implies, is saying that the ageless struggle of man with the earth is the most fully satisfying way of life. In *My Antonia* only those characters who keep close touch with the land truly fulfill themselves. Despite their success in business, Lena Lingard and Tiny Soderball lead barren lives. Jim Burden, the successful New York lawyer, on returning to Nebraska after years in the East, suddenly understands that in his city life he has lost the essential reality. It is Antonia, called by one critic a Venus genetrix reincarnate,⁹ who, by returning to the land, marrying a farmer, and rearing strong sons, has truly realized herself and gained a quiet happiness. In her natural creativeness, in her closeness to the basic fertility of nature, Cather sees

⁸ Similarly in *The Professor's House* Tom Outland sees modern life more clearly because he has found an ancient cliff dwellers' city on a mesa in the Southwest. In his mind the beauties of the lost city and of the "filial piety" of Virgil's *Aeneid* become inextricably associated. After he has read through the twelve books of Virgil's epic while spending his last days near the ancient city, he says: "For me the mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion. I had read of filial piety in the Latin poets, and I knew that that was what I felt for this place" (p. 251). Later, whenever he looked at Virgil's poem, he always saw behind it the mesa (p. 252). In *Shadows on the Rock* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* the ancient traditions that are introduced to the new lands are those of the Catholic Church. In the former Virgil again appears as a symbol of European culture. The poor water carrier, Blinker, is compared to Queen Dido, and the nuns in the little wilderness city of Quebec can be happy because they, like Aeneas in Italy, have brought their gods with them: "*Inferret deos Latio*. When an adventurer carries his gods with him into a remote and savage country, the colony he founds will, from the beginning, have graces, traditions, riches of the mind and spirit" (p. 98).

⁹ George F. Whicher, "In the American Grain," *The Literature of the American People*, ed. Arthur Hobson Quinn (New York, 1951), p. 908. Cather herself effectively uses the symbol of Aphrodite in her story "Coming, Aphrodite!" in the volume *Youth and the Bright Medusa*.

the essential meaning of life. Out of women like Antonia and Lena as she had been in her youth grow the beauty and poetry of life. This is the "inestimably precious" revelation that Jim Burden perceives as he reads his Virgil.

Cather goes on to suggest that Virgil makes in the passage from the *Georgics* another general statement about human life: "optima dies . . . prima fugit," "in the lives of mortals, the best days are the first to flee." Jim Burden looks back to the days of his boyhood on the prairie as the most satisfying of his life. Lena Lingard gains her strength from her early experiences. Only when Antonia returns to the creative farm life she had known as a girl does she really find herself. Our earliest, most natural days, Cather seems to be saying, are our best days. And what is true of individuals is also true of nations. Cather is much attracted by the golden ages of the past, by early Quebec in *Shadows on the Rock*, by the early Southwest in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, by the ancient cliff dwellers in *The Professor's House*. In *My Antonia* she finds the greatest value in simple farm life that reproduces in the present many of the conditions of pioneer days. The cities and little towns have, like the people in them, become cheapened and meaningless; only by a return to the Saturnian simplicity of the rural past can man find peace. Like Virgil, Cather seems to hint a Golden Age that can be restored by a return to agricultural or pastoral life. Virgil's *Georgics* are for her a lasting symbol of the need for such a return. The Mantuan can guide her, as he guided Dante, to the earthly paradise.¹⁰

To renew ourselves or our country we must return to the golden days of youth. But in truth we cannot return, we cannot regain those best days that fly first. For, though we may eventually find our way back to the bosom of the earth that nourished our childhood, we come back beaten and scarred by our experiences. Jim returns, and then but temporarily, only after an unsuccessful marriage and years of futile success. Antonia has to go through the agony of being deceived and bearing an illegitimate child before like Antaeus she puts her feet again firmly on the earth and draws strength from it. To Cather, then, Virgil's message in the *Georgics* is basically a melancholy one. Of this view of life Antonia is the symbol. As Jim Burden says, she means,

¹⁰ By reference to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Cather emphasizes her view of Virgil as a guide: "I remember vividly another evening when something led us to talk of Dante's veneration for Virgil. Cleric went through canto after canto of the 'Commedia,' repeating the discourse between Virgil and his 'sweet teacher,' while his cigarette burned itself out unheeded between his long fingers. I can hear him now, speaking the lines of the poet Statius, who spoke for Dante: 'I was famous on earth with name which endures longest and honours most. The seeds of my ardour were the sparks from that divine flame whereby more than a thousand have kindled; I speak of the "Aeneid," mother to me and nurse to me in poetry'" (*My Antonia*, pp. 169-170).

"more than any other person," "the country, the conditions, the whole adventure of our childhood,"¹¹ and indeed the basic truth about life in general:

In my memory there was a succession of such pictures, fixed there like old woodcuts of one's first primer: Antonia kicking her bare legs against the sides of my pony when we came home in triumph with our snakes; Antonia in her black shawl and fur cap, as she stood by her father's grave in the snowstorm; Antonia coming in with her work-team along the evening sky-line. She lent herself to immemorial human attitudes which we recognize by instinct as universal and true. I had not been mistaken. She was a battered woman now, not a lovely girl; but she still had that something that fires the imagination, could still stop one's breath for a moment by a look or gesture that somehow revealed the meaning in common things. She had only to stand in the orchard, to put her hand on a little crab tree and look up at the apples, to make you feel the goodness of planting and tending and harvesting at last. All the strong things of her heart came out in her body, that had been so tireless in serving generous emotions.

It was no wonder that her sons stood tall and straight. She was a rich mine of life, like the founders of early races.¹²

Thus Willa Cather has skillfully woven threads from the *Georgics* into the very fabric of her novel, and thereby given her story of the Nebraska plains a universality and depth it would not otherwise have. But there is another and perhaps even more interesting question: How sound is her interpretation of the *Georgics*? Does she understand Virgil's poem as it really is, or does she misrepresent it by reading into it her own meaning and investing it with her own feeling?

According to Cleric, when Virgil lay dying at Brundisium he thought that his *Georgics* were greater than his uncompleted epic. This supposition it is idle to argue; but when Cather implies that in the lines rejecting mythological or heroic poetry (III, 3-8) Virgil is stating a general theory, she is probably reading too much into his lines. Virgil clearly did not believe that all true poetry must necessarily grow out of the lives of people close to the land. It is a nineteenth-century rather than a Roman theory that Cather is expressing when Jim says that, if there were no girls like Lena and Antonia, there would be no poetry. Nor, despite his desire to celebrate his own native locality—

primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,
Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas;
primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas
et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
proper aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
Mincius et tenera praetexit harundine ripas—¹³

is Virgil really a regionalist or local-color author. The poem as a whole, especially in the light of Augustus' definite policy of encouraging

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

¹³ III, 10-15.

Italian rather than purely local patriotism, must be read primarily as an exaltation of Italy in general rather than of the Mantuan neighborhood. Indeed, the famous patriotic passage in Book II (lines 136-176) makes this national emphasis abundantly clear. Thus Gaston Cleric's interpretation of *patria* as applying not to "a nation or even a province, but the little rural neighborhood on the Mincio where the poet was born" is open to serious question. Willa Cather is interpreting Virgil, it appears, in the light of early twentieth-century American regionalism.

The interpretation of "in patriam mecum . . . deducam Musas" as referring to Virgil's attempt to apply the techniques of Greek poetry to the Mantuan countryside is logical and supported by Virgil's own words. Like Ennius before him, he was consciously leading the Muses from Helicon to Rome and showing that Roman life could be made the subject of beautiful poetry formed on Greek models. But into this fairly simple concept of borrowing Greek artistry Cather has read a larger meaning than Virgil probably intended. She seems to imply that like herself he is emphasizing the continuity of cultural as well as purely literary tradition. Though in a striking passage (II, 532-540) Virgil refers to the Etruscans and the Sabines and other men of old, and though he speaks of farmers someday turning up with their crooked plows and heavy hoes the broken javelins and empty helmets of Roman armies of long ago (I, 493-497), he is not really concerned in the *Georgics* with interpreting the agricultural life of Latium against the background of distant or older traditions. Unlike Cather, who attempts to show the transfer of tradition from distant lands to Nebraska, from past to present, Virgil is merely making use of Greek inspiration and Greek form.

Cather is, of course, entirely justified in believing that Virgil intends to celebrate rural life. Though he is in part politically motivated, it is obvious that he sincerely shares in the traditional Roman love of the land. Into the second book of his didactic poem, however, he inserts a passage that has a somewhat different tone than the work as a whole. This is the paean on rustic life in the lines beginning "O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, agricolas." Though the husbandman may have no lofty palaces or glittering robes, he can find peace and contentment and virtue far from the broils and wars and ambitions of city life. He will have peace and healthy pastimes and frolicking children.

at secura quies et nescia fallere vita,
dives opum variarum, at latis otia fundis,
speluncae vivique lacus et frigida Tempe
mugitusque boum mollesque sub arbore somni
non absunt; illic saltus ac lustra ferarum,
et patiens operum exiguoque adsueta iuventus,
sacra deum sanctique patres: extrema per illos
Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.

Following his Muse, Virgil himself would prefer to strive for a philosophic understanding of the inner workings of the universe; but he recognizes that those who worship Pan and Sylvanus and the other gods of nature are no less happy. If he must make a second choice, he will gladly turn to the fields and streams and woods.¹⁴ *My Antonia* very well reproduces the strong feeling of this passage. But out of it Cather has drawn an almost mystic fertility cult of which the *Georgics* know nothing. In much of his poem Virgil is nearly as factual as Cato or Varro. Even in this passage, while highly exalting the simple life next to nature, he recognizes that the poetical or philosophical life is something apart and to him preferable. He does not imply, as Cather seems to do, that the only satisfying or creative life is that directly in contact with nature. Furthermore, like Tacitus's glorification of the Germans, Virgil's praise of the rural is to some degree occasioned by the common Roman desire to satirize by contrast the vices and luxuries of sophisticated city living. While Virgil refers to the ancient rustic gods and finds in the country the purest, most religious, and most peaceful life, he does not invest nature with the mystic spiritual power that Cather finds in the prairies and fields.

Still more doubtful is the broad general significance that Cather reads in "optima dies . . . prima fugit." In the third book of the *Georgics* Virgil is discussing husbandry. In the particular passage from which Cather takes her quotation he is talking about the breeding of horses and cattle. He says that these animals breed best between the fourth and tenth years:

cetera nec feturae habilis nec fortis aratris.
interea, superat gregibus dum laeta iuventas,
solve mares; mitte in Venerem pecuaria primus,
atque aliam ex alia generando suffice prolem.
optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis.
semper erunt, quarum mutari corpora malis:
semper enim refice ac, ne post amissa requiras.
anteveni et subolem armento sortire quotannis.¹⁵

His not unusual little moral is thus, almost humorously, enclosed completely in directions on breeding. Doubtless Virgil means it as a general comment on man's life; very likely he does look back to childhood days as carefree and happy. Doubtless also he believes at least poetically, as the end of Book II demonstrates, in the Golden Age of mankind, though the sixth book of the *Aeneid* seems to show an even stronger faith in human progress. But in reading the phrase "optima dies . . . prima fugit," out of its context, as Virgil's serious general comment on life

¹⁴ Lines 458-540. Those quoted are 467-474.

¹⁵ Lines 62-71.

and in broadening its application to the essential spiritual and moral aspects of living, Cather is putting too much weight on a single passage. This is not the principal lesson or the main tone either of the third *Georgic* in particular or of all the *Georgics* in general. Virgil is, aside from a few emotional passages, factual rather than elegiac or melancholy. He is not, like the nineteenth-century romantics, constantly concerned with the transiency of the golden days of youth or the golden ages of nations. He is not primarily looking back on his childhood or his country's childhood, but is picturing for the present the rural life of the present, the life he had incidentally known as a boy. His phrase here is almost casual. Though they are partly in the pastoral tradition, the *Georgics* are not elegies nor even idylls. They are closer to the Roman textbooks on farming than to Keats' *Endymion*. While understanding fully their beauty and their artistry, Cather has overemphasized their moral meaning.

Thus in general one can say that the Virgil Cather creates by selection and emphasis, while for the most part very close to the real Roman poet, is to some degree a twentieth-century Virgil with thoughts and emotions the original Mantuan might not quite understand. Into his lines she reads a romantic, almost sentimental regionalism and an emotional concern with the passing beauties of youth and primitive ages that the lines themselves, though they may seem to hint, do not explicitly state and probably do not imply. It is questionable whether a Roman, however much he may have loved his Sabine farm or his villa on the Mincio, would have looked to farm life with quite the intense, nearly religious emotional fervor that Cather manifests. Virgil loved the creative force of nature as it worked in the countryside, but he did not, even as much as Lucretius, make worship of external nature his deepest faith. The *anima mundi* of which he speaks in the *Aeneid* is a far more abstract, philosophical conception. Nevertheless, though Cather has at times seen Virgil too much in her own image, she has well represented in her novel his depth, spirit, and artistry. Though she by no means owes her ideas mainly or even in large part to the Roman poet, she has preached on texts from Virgil in her own way her own sermon to the twentieth century. *My Antonia* is a genuine *Georgic*, but an American rather than a Roman *Georgic*.

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KAFKA'S IMITATION OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

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IT IS Kafka himself who invites a comparison with Dickens. His novel *Amerika*, he says in his diary, was intended to be a "sheer imitation" of Dickens' *David Copperfield*. It was to include "the story of the trunk, the boy who delights and charms everyone, the menial labor, his sweetheart in the country house, the dirty houses, et al., but above all the method." He intended to avoid what he felt to be Dickens' weaknesses—"opulence and great, careless prodigality, but in consequence passages of awful insipidity in which he wearily works over effects he has already achieved," "a heartlessness behind his sentimentally overflowing style," and "rude characterizations which are artificially stamped on everyone."¹ While the result of this intention was an unfinished work edited for publication after Kafka's death, *Amerika* is not so fragmentary or difficult a work as to be incapable of comparison with Dickens.

The challenge of such a comparison has not, I think, been satisfactorily met in Kafka criticism. Klaus Mann, in his preface to Edwin Muir's translation of *Amerika*, dismisses any resemblance to Dickens as "only accidental and superficial." Conversely, he thinks that "the differences between the sentimental or humorous circumstantiality of Dickens' style and Kafka's visionary precision are basic and essential." His view is essentially based on a rigid philosophic dichotomy between the two writers. "The adolescent heroes of the English master-novelist have to endure suffering and adventures because the world is wicked. But Karl Rossmann, the leading character of Kafka's story, is harassed by more profound and complicated dangers: the problem of guilt *as such*, the mystic curse of Original Sin follows him over the ocean."² The weakness of Mann's dismissal of resemblance lies in its too sweeping assumption of philosophic differences and in its failure to examine

¹ *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Martin Greenberg with the cooperation of Hannah Arendt (New York, 1949), pp. 188-189.

² Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, trans. Edwin Muir, preface by Klaus Mann (New York, 1946), pp. vii-viii. A clue to Kafka's association of America with Dickens would seem to lie, as far as novels are concerned, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. In their American adventure, Martin and Tom are harassed by bad table manners, the chewing of tobacco, impositions and rudeness, and a burlesqued chauvinism. Swindled in the purchase of land in the Valley of Eden, they nearly die in the miasmal swamp it really is, and retreat to England. Dickens' satire has little in common with Kafka's twentieth-century country with its telephones, elevators, and elaborate organization. All these Kafka could have taken from Prague, though one suspects that he had seen some American movies, particularly Chaplin comedies with their frenetic grotesqueries.

the specific details of Kafka's definition of his intention. Kafka clearly meant to avoid characteristics of Dickens that Mann says constitute an important part of their difference, and, after he had subtracted them from his esteem of the other writer, there was a considerable residue of things that vitally interested him.

The failure to follow up Kafka's statement is apparent also in Rudolf Vařata's " 'Amerika' and Charles Dickens."³ Vařata approaches the problem from the critical viewpoint that regards both Kafka and Dickens as concerned primarily, if not exclusively, with social themes. Their only important difference is one of milieu and, consequently, of technique. Though Dickens fought against evils in the political, economic, and social conditions of his time, he belonged to a period when "industrialization and the whole progress of capitalistic society had a task to fulfill"; he was a citizen of a world power, and he was a man of the people who could write for readers in various strata of society. Kafka, on the other hand, lived during the decay and fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and, writing in German in Prague, had as an audience only a small circle who could respond "only in so far as his work appealed to their individualistically coloured sense of aesthetic values and to their not less varied and changing philosophical or religious moods." The consequence for Dickens' symbolism was a realistic upper layer of events, for Kafka's an unrealistic upper layer of strange, unusual events. Vařata's contention is that both symbolisms express much the same thing—criticism of an oppressive social system.

Little of Vařata's discussion is concerned with either *Amerika* or *David Copperfield*, probably because they did not suit his thesis as well as other novels. His contention that Kafka is primarily engaged in social protest places him in serious disagreement not only with the brief remarks of Klaus Mann but also with the extended philosophic and religious interpretations of Kafka by Brod, Tauber, and many others. His view that Dickens' technique is one of surface realism is also open to challenge. It was the method, or technique, of *David Copperfield* that Kafka wished to imitate above everything else.

I propose to reapproach the problem of a Kafka-Dickens relationship by examining point by point the relevance of the two novels to the evidence Kafka gives us in his diary. It is my contention that what interested Kafka most was Dickens' achievement of certain qualities of experience that cannot be completely reduced to systematic religious or social explication, and that were particularly compatible with Kafka's own sensibility. These qualities of experience are, broadly, moral and emotional ambiguity and perplexity. And they are created by Dickens, as well as Kafka, through distortion rather than realistic verisimilitude. The term that best characterizes the total effect is *grotesque*.

³ *The Kafka Problem*, ed. Angel Flores (New York, 1946), pp. 134-139.

Of the five specific things in *David Copperfield* that Kafka intended to use, one is "the story of the trunk," evidently a reference to the episode in which it is stolen from Copperfield. Two are characters: "the boy who delights and charms everyone," who must be Copperfield's friend Steerforth; and "his sweetheart in the country house," who, if one takes "country house" to mean the house of a family of means, is Copperfield's sweetheart and wife, Dora Spenlow. A fourth is "the menial labor," which probably refers to Copperfield's early employment at Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse, but could be extended to the grinding clerical work engaged in by Traddles, by Copperfield as court reporter, and for a time even by Mr. Micawber. The last is "the dirty houses," which pervade Dickens' portrait of London as an important element of mood.

The trunk (or "box" as Dickens calls it and as Muir translates in *Amerika*) receives so little space in *David Copperfield* that Kafka's remembering it is doubly significant. In the early part of the story, it is only casually mentioned as an article that goes with Copperfield on his travels. Not until the crisis of his running away from the hateful Murdstones and the oppressive warehouse does Dickens make truly creative use of it, and then in a single episode. Copperfield, outside the protection of the law as a runaway, enlists the aid of a strange young man with a cart to get his box to the coach office. Instead of making the simple, decent human response Copperfield expects, this chance friend bullies him, takes his half-guinea by a clever trick, and drives off with his box. Abstractly considered, this might be read as Vařata's social injustice, especially if one overlooked the fact that the young man is of the lower class; but what Dickens creates is Copperfield's experience of frustration and fear so rapidly multiplied that the effect is utterly grotesque.

I ran after him as fast as I could, but I had no breath to call out with, and should not have dared to call out, now, if I had. I narrowly escaped being run over, twenty-times at least in half a mile. Now I lost him, now I saw him, now I lost him, now I was cut at with a whip, now shouted at, now down in the mud, now up again, now running into somebody's arms, now running headlong at a post. At length, confused by fright and heat, and doubting whether half London might not by this time be turning out for my apprehension, I left the young man to go where he would with my box and money . . ."⁴

Copperfield runs after his tormenter but as a consequence loses his breath and can't call for help, yet wouldn't have dared to if he could. He loses and finds alternatively, is assaulted by both his enemy and his own mistakes, and is impeded by symbols of both help and arrest (the arms) and of both useful object and obstacle (the post). He is confused emotionally and physically, and abandons the chase because he himself may be the hunted. It is this grotesque creation of ambiguity

⁴ *David Copperfield* (National Library ed., New York, n.d.), I, 237-238.

and frustration, I think, that interested Kafka and may have caused him to remember the episode.

Kafka does more sustained and grotesquely ironic things with Karl Rossmann's box. Rossmann, unlike Copperfield, is not an orphan in the serious sense of the word. He is exiled by his family because he has been seduced by a servant girl, whose pregnancy threatens them with scandal and the payment of alimony. Such comically grotesque ineffectuality extends through his worry over the box to his eventual loss of a materially insignificant but symbolically important part of its contents. At debarkation he leaves it in the care of a stranger while he goes below to retrieve his umbrella. Lost below decks, and then involved with the stoker and his perplexity, he worries not so much because of the box's material value as because of its connections with his father and mother. It contains a spare suit which his mother had hastily mended just before he left, and a piece of salami she had packed as a tidbit for him but which he has not had the appetite to eat. Puzzling over how to establish friendly relations with the stoker, Rossmann wishes he had the salami to give him because he remembers how his father won over subordinate officials by the gift of a trifle like a cigar. He remembers with embarrassment his father's saying in jest when he gave him the box, "How long will you keep it?"

For Rossmann, then, the box is a fragile and painful tie with the past. It suggests his failure at home, his father's superiority, and his mother's pathetic attempts to help him from her subordinate role in the patriarchal family. It functions in this way until he finds temporary sanctuary with his fellow countrywoman, the Manageress of the Hotel Occidental. After being rejected by his uncle, Rossmann has fallen in with the vagabond mechanics Delamarche and Robinson. Wanting to be friends with them, he gets no more humane response than did Copperfield from the young man with the cart. They do not steal his box, while he is gone to get food for them, but rudely rifle its contents and take the most personal link with home, a photograph of his parents. In the presence of a waiter who has come to extend the Manageress's friendly invitation, he tries unsuccessfully to get it back.

"It's no good," said the waiter.

"They've probably torn up the photograph and flung the pieces away," said Karl. "I thought they were friends, but in their hearts they only wished me ill. Not so much Robinson; it would never have occurred to him that I set much store on the photograph; that's more like Delamarche." Karl could now see only the waiter, whose flash-lamp lit up a tiny circle, while everything else, including Delamarche and Robinson, lay in deep darkness.

There was naturally no question now of the two men going to the hotel with Karl. The waiter swung the box on to his shoulder, Karl picked up the straw basket, and they set off. Karl had already reached the road when, starting out of his thoughts, he stopped and shouted up into the darkness: "Listen to me. If either of you has the photograph and will bring it to me at the hotel, he can still

have the box, and I swear that I won't make any charge against him." No actual answer came, only a stifled word could be heard, the beginning of a shout from Robinson, whose mouth was obviously stopped at once by Delamarche. Karl waited for a long time, in case the men above him might change their minds. He shouted twice, at intervals: "I'm still here!" But no sound came in reply, except that a stone rolled down the slope, perhaps a chance stone, perhaps a badly-aimed throw.⁵

The passage is not at all an imitation in the literal sense of the word. It contains nothing of the kinetic quality of Copperfield's bruising against hazard and obstacle. Quietly and statically a voice pleads with unanswering darkness. There are two evils, one slightly greater than the other, in Delamarche and Robinson instead of the single maliciousness of the young man with the cart. And Rossmann even has some comfort and promise in the tiny circle of light cast by the waiter's lamp. But the stifled voice and the stone that rolls down the slope—"perhaps a chance stone, perhaps a badly-aimed throw"—make his misfortune as ambiguously felt yet as final as Copperfield's.

So closely circumstantial a parallel cannot be made for the other Dickens material Kafka noted for use. The delightful boy is undoubtedly Dickens' Steerforth. His charm is so subtly mingled with a moral flaw as to be understood only by gradual revelation. Copperfield first meets him at the sadistic Mr. Creakle's school for boys, where Steerforth becomes his admired protector. The episode in which Steerforth gratuitously causes the dismissal of Mr. Mell is very like one of Kafka's trials—for example, that of Rossmann by the Head Waiter, ending in his dismissal—in which the dialectic of innocence is defeated by that of power sitting in judgment. Long afterward, when Copperfield is launched in the world by his aunt, the friendship is renewed. Copperfield sees the unbending pride of Steerforth's mother and the bitterness of Rosa Dartle, whose livid scar represents not only Steerforth's irresponsible physical injury of her but her torment between love and knowledge of him. He hears from Steerforth's own mouth scorn of those less fortunate and powerful but more scrupulous than he. But he does not feel the enormity of the ambiguity until Steerforth, having charmed his friends, seduces Emily. Love and knowledge are then unbearably intermingled. This experience of the ambiguity of a powerful personality must have appealed strongly to Kafka's sense of the morally and emotionally grotesque.

The closest counterpart to Steerforth in *Amerika* is Mr. Mack, who, early every morning when Rossmann desperately wants to sleep, takes him horseback riding,⁶ just as Steerforth causes Copperfield to lose sleep by requiring stories of him every night. Steerforth is cheer-

⁵ *Amerika*, pp. 118-119.

⁶ Steerforth at one point teaches Copperfield riding, fencing, and boxing. *David Copperfield*, I, 398.

ful, though aware that he is not following the career his mother wishes. Mack is a failure by his millionaire parents' standards; but, despite this and a strenuous life that would soon break an ordinary man, he wears an unchanging smile of happiness. He too is something of a protector and an idol. Rossmann's unhappiness with his painful riding lessons ceases once Mack appears. He takes pleasure in Mack's command of everything, though the half hour of this is fleeting as a dream. Mack's attitude, like Steerforth's, is patronizing and hypocritical. He pats Rossmann on the cheek if he is particularly pleased with his performance, and vanishes, too pressed for time even to accompany him to the door. After Rossmann is rudely treated by the athletic Clara at Mr. Pollunder's country house, he finds that she, as Mack's fiancée, already sleeps with him, a relationship perhaps grotesquely analogous to the immorality of Steerforth's seduction of Emily—certainly another Kafkan contrast of hypocritical power with innocent ineffectuality. From his bed Mack patronizingly praises Rossmann's hesitant performance at the piano, and hypocritically says that he has had Clara lure him from New York so that he can hear him.

Kafka's characterization of Mack, while it is proportioned to its terse context, is only a sketch beside Dickens' elaboration of Steerforth. But the combination of power and charm with social and moral hypocrisy has much in common with Dickens' portrait. The effect on Rossmann is the same as that on Copperfield—simultaneous attraction and bafflement.

Kafka's sweetheart in the country house is still more remote from Dickens. Copperfield is troubled during his courtship of Dora Spenslow, not only by the parental and social obstacles to their match, but by her ineffectuality. In marriage the disparity between his affection for her and his need of a mature woman who can manage their home and share his problems becomes painfully apparent. Her exaggerated attachment to the dog, Jip, which expresses both her loveliness and her childishness, might well have appealed to Kafka's sense of the grotesquely ironic.

Kafka's Rossmann is baffled by Clara Pollunder in a very different way. She and her father are apparently instruments of the powerful and hypocritical Mr. Green. At dinner she is involved in a revelation of hypocrisy that Kafka handles in a way frequently used by Dickens—the belying of fine words by ugly action. Green sarcastically praises his infirm old housekeeper, who insists on carrying the dishes from the door of the dining room to the table although he has persuaded her to give up the journey from the kitchen.

"Heavens," cried Clara, "what fidelity!"

"Yes, there's still fidelity in the world," said Mr. Green, putting a slice of pigeon into his mouth, where his tongue, as Karl chanced to notice, took it in

charge with a flourish. Karl felt nearly sick and got up. Almost simultaneously Mr. Pollunder and Clara caught him by the hands.⁷

Clara's desire to get Karl to come to her room seems motivated primarily by her being Green's instrument. Rossmann feels his uncle's disapproval of his visit to the Pollunders, though he did not strictly forbid it, and wishes to return and sue for forgiveness. By keeping him occupied until midnight, Green may deliver the uncle's letter of rejection of Rossmann with the least inconvenience to himself and the uncle. Clara is thus part of a quite Dickensian bit of machination against the innocent by the morally irresponsible. Her personal qualities, too, baffle Rossmann. As a woman seemingly interested in him, she is in her way as surprising as Dora Spenlow. Her attempt to force him to come to her room, her nearly throwing him out of a window when he resists, her tricking him into relaxing his strength and then pinning him with a jiu-jitsu hold, are a comically modern reversal of the character of Dora. Her rather violent grotesqueness suggests another Dickens figure, Miss Havisham's servant girl in *Great Expectations*—like Clara the instrument of a higher-up, and malicious and violent toward the hero.

If Kafka had in mind as the sweetheart in the country house Copperfield's Little Em'ly, her pathos is most strongly suggested in *Amerika* by the servant girl Therese. Her sympathy for Rossmann also suggests the nature of Copperfield's good angel, Agnes. Therese tells Rossmann a story of personal misfortune that, in its quality of grotesquely pathetic pantomime, is straight Dickens. As a child, she had wandered forsaken and hungry through the snow with her immigrant mother, and seen her fall to her death from the scaffolding of a building where she hoped to get a job as a hod woman. Both Kafka and Dickens are full of servant girls, orphaned or as good as orphaned, and bound to authority that may or may not be benevolent, who may actually be or only seem to be sympathetic to the hero. The ambiguity as well as the pathos of their position is another aspect of the experience which Kafka and Dickens share.

The menial labor that Kafka notes for imitation suggests Copperfield's unhappy situation in the Murdstone and Grinby warehouse. His job is purely mechanical. He checks empty wine bottles for flaws, washes, corks, and seals them, pastes on labels, and packs them in casks. He has a protector against the rougher boys in Mick Walker, but beyond that no source of counsel or sympathy. Rossmann, as an elevator boy in a hotel, is trapped in a more complicated, modern system of meaningless work. He performs only a ridiculously infinitesimal part of the process, the pressing of buttons. His personal life is limited to a dormitory existence. The least departure from the strict rules

⁷ *Amerika*, p. 55.

results in dismissal. He too has a protector in his fellow countrywoman, the Manageress, who originally rescued him from Delamarche and Robinson. But when he is tried by the Head Waiter for leaving his post without permission to help the drunken Robinson, and then trying to conceal him out of fear for his job, her defense of him finally yields to prejudiced, inflexible authority, and he is dismissed. The tone and the righteous logic of the Head Waiter suggest the voice of Dickens' Pecksniff in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

"My dear Manageress . . . , to be quite frank, I wouldn't have believed that you were such a bad judge of character. I've just learned something about your angel boy which will radically alter your opinion of him, and I almost feel sorry that it is from me it has to come to your ears. This fine pet of yours, this pattern of all the virtues, rushes off to the town every single free night he has and never comes back till morning. Yes, yes, I have evidence of it, unimpeachable evidence, yes. Now can you tell me, perhaps, where he gets hold of the money for these nocturnal adventures? Or how he can be expected to attend properly to his work? And do you want me to go to the length of telling you what he does in the town? A boy like that is to be got rid of as quickly as possible. And please let this be a warning to you how careful you should be with boys who turn up from nowhere."⁸

Rossmann actually takes hope when he hears the falseness of this part of the accusation. But he cannot defend himself against the flood of rhetoric any better than can Copperfield when listening to Murdstone or Heep, and the Manageress is not as indomitable as Copperfield's aunt. When she decides against him, she reminds one of Martin Chuzzlewit just before his feigned senility and deference to Pecksniff's false, cruel judgments. "Her eyes looked straight at Karl; they were large and blue, but a little dimmed by age and many troubles." The gratuitous brutality of the Head Porter that follows has its *Copperfield* analogy in Mr. Creakle's bullying of the boys on the principle that it is good for them whether they are guilty of anything or not.

The last specific thing Kafka listed for imitation is "the dirty houses." Such down-at-heels houses and their areas pervade Dickens' portraits of London, particularly when he is dealing with the law or with young men beginning careers and trying to maintain airs of respectability in absurd circumstances. The mood conveyed by them is one of decayed isolation from the main currents of life. They constitute an ambiguous half-world for the play of good and evil. An example in *David Copperfield* is the house Copperfield enters with the outcast Martha.

The house swarmed with inmates. As we went up, doors of rooms were opened and people's heads put out; and we passed other people on the stairs, who were coming down. In glancing up from the outside, before we entered, I had seen women and children lolling at the windows over flower-pots; and we seemed to have attracted their curiosity, for these were principally the observers who looked out of their doors. It was a broad panelled staircase, with massive balustrades of

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

some dark wood; cornices above the doors, ornamented with carved fruit and flowers; and broad seats in the windows. But all these tokens of past grandeur were miserably decayed and dirty; rot, damp, and age, had weakened the flooring, which in many places was unsound and even unsafe... Several of the back-windows on the staircase had been darkened or wholly blocked up. In those that remained, there was scarcely any glass; and, through the crumbling frames by which the bad air seemed always to come in, and never to go out, I saw, through other glassless windows, into other houses in a similar condition, and looked giddily down into a wretched yard, which was the common dust-heap of the mansion.⁹

The effect, as in Kafka settings, is of aimless, disconnected lives. It is grotesque, an effect gained by the piling up of details. In Dickens' peopling of the house, there is a mixture of tableau and pantomime—women and children lolling at windows, heads peeping out of doorways. Kafka's accused in *The Trial* seek the court in a squalid tenement district, and the narrative is dotted with little tableaux of people working, children playing, and faces simply staring out of windows. An example in *Amerika* is Rossmann's passage through the courtyards off which live the sinister Delamarche, Brunelda, and Robinson.

The courtyards they threaded were almost completely forsaken. An occasional porter pushed a two-wheeled handbarrow before him, a woman was filling a bucket with water at a pump, a postman was quietly making his round, an old man with a white moustache sat before a glass door smoking a pipe with his legs crossed, crates were being unloaded before a despatch agency while the idle horses imperturbably turned their heads from side to side and a man in overalls supervised the proceedings with a paper in his hand; behind the open window of an office a clerk, sitting at his desk, raised his head and looked thoughtfully out just as Karl and Delamarche went past.¹⁰

Access to the apartments off these ironically peaceful courtyards is by dark stairways, as in Dickens. Perspectives are altered and mysterious. As Rossmann and his sinister friends stand in the hallway they, like Dickens' characters, are the objects of apparently aimless curiosity.

A few doors farther on two women stepped out into the passage; they wiped their hands on their aprons, eyeing Delamarche and Robinson, and seemed to be talking about them. A young girl with gleaming fair hair bounded out of a door and squeezed between the two women, hanging on to their arms.¹¹

The interior of the apartment is Dickensian in its neglect.

They stepped into complete darkness. The curtain before the balcony door—there was no window—was completely drawn and let very little light through; but the fact that the room was crammed with furniture and clothes hanging everywhere contributed greatly to make it darker. The air was musty and one could literally smell the dust which had gathered here in corners apparently beyond the reach of any hand.¹²

⁹ *David Copperfield*, II, 371-372.

¹⁰ *Amerika*, p. 204.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Trapped here in the service of the grotesquely fat Brunelda, Rossmann observes the neighborhood from the balcony. While the life is that of the modern, many-celled apartment house rather than Dickens' old London lodging houses, the effect of a teeming, pointless existence is quite Dickensian.

This examination of *Amerika* and *David Copperfield* in the light of Kafka's note reveals, of course, no literal imitation. Rather, it suggests that Kafka felt for Dickens one of those affinities of the sensibility and the imagination that are stimulating and subtly enriching. Dickens' nineteenth-century story of a homeless boy was more a challenge than a model. Kafka speaks in his diary of adding what he calls sharper lights taken from his times; and he gives Rossmann's adventures a complex, unrelieved perplexity that many of us think distinguishes our century from that of Dickens. There is no Copperfieldian happy ending of love, marriage, and position for Rossmann. His apogee is simply acceptance into a baffling but apparently democratic organization removed from reality by the name "The Nature Theatre of Oklahoma." Nevertheless, there were hints for Kafka in Copperfield's experience. In the episode of the trunk it was the experience of undeserved and unexplained loss. In character it was the ambiguity of mingled charm and evil, strong attractiveness and violent negation of simple human trust. In occupation it was the disconnectedness and frustration of menial, routine work, and yet its necessity. In setting it was isolation, decay, and darkness—the subtle evil of the outcast life.

As for method, or technique, which Kafka wished to imitate above all, it is integral with the quality of experience, achieved through distortion of reality. It is the technique of the grotesque. Nothing is more revealing of this technique in Dickens than a movie of one of his stories,¹³ in which all his authorial comment falls away so that one is not diverted and reassured by familiar sentiment and moral, and the ambiguous and the grotesque are seen more purely. Indeed, many of the effects have the dream quality usually attributed to Kafka. This quality must have been an important factor in Kafka's attraction to Dickens.

Kafka's interest in Dickens' technique cannot be sealed off from thematic affinity. There is surely some truth in Vařata's belief that both writers indict society, though Vařata sounds too doctrinaire, applying Marxist jargon without close, unprejudiced reading of texts. There is much, too, in Mann's desire for a religious interpretation of Kafka, though in explication this leads to the danger of imposing a formula on an experience that is not neatly allegorical. Perhaps there is a middle ground that will admit a philosophic direction and at the same time preserve the experience that is the novel. I think that Kafka was saying

¹³ For example, *Great Expectations*, with its initial scene on the desolate marsh climaxed by Pip's terrifying confrontation with the convict.

that the way to any kind of salvation—social, ethical, or religious—is an ambiguous adventure with comic and tragic overtones. Dickens was often saying the same thing. It seems to me that the most central philosophic meeting ground for their sensibilities is the ethical. Max Brod attributes to his friend Kafka an exquisite sense of kindly and just human relationships. "Absolute truthfulness was one of the most prominent traits in Kafka's nature. Another was his unimaginably precise conscientiousness. It became apparent whenever a moral problem was raised: not the slightest shadow of an injustice ever escaped him."¹⁴ Dickens, of course, flamed with a concern for human justice that could hardly have escaped Kafka.

Finally, the Dickens influence on Kafka must be kept in perspective. The elements of moral ambiguity and of the technique of the grotesque—down to the menial labor and the squalid houses—can also be found in Dostoevsky, another master novelist revered by Kafka, who is much closer to his predicament. And such elements abounded in other novelists Kafka knew. It was primarily in connection with the problem of telling the story of a homeless boy that Kafka pondered Dickens so curiously and profoundly.

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¹⁴ Excerpt from *Biography of Franz Kafka*, trans. by G. Humphreys-Roberts, in *A Franz Kafka Miscellany* (New York, 1946), pp. 33-34.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE OVERREACHER: A STUDY OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. By Harry Levin. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952. xiii, 204 p.

Harry Levin is a professor who professes his subject whole and alive. He defies the usual jargon of classification. Does his writing belong to "literary history," "the history of ideas," "the New Criticism"? For one thing, his range is enormous. And it must be admitted that there are still those who have some suspicion of a man who seems to write with equal authority—and *relish*—about James Joyce and Christopher Marlowe.

The fact is that Levin's recent study of Marlowe, *The Overreacher*, is proof of what can be achieved by the sensitive, eclectic, critical mind which is amply furnished with knowledge but wholly free of pedantry. Levin "takes account" of all that is known of Marlowe, his "sources," his "influences," etc. But he is concerned here, in the main, to do two things (and perhaps they are really one)—to delineate Marlowe's "poetic" personality (as distinct from his "practical" personality), and to assess the significance of that personality for the Renaissance tradition. All the tools of the trade are employed. This is first-rate, firsthand criticism, nourished on exact knowledge, made relevant at every move to our excruciating, modern preoccupation with the pressures upon us of the living past.

Levin sees Marlowe, he of the "overreaching" image and mighty line, as the prototype of the Western heretic. "The whole trinity of Marlowe's heresies, violating the taboos of mediaeval orthodoxy, was an affirmation of the strongest drives that animated the Renaissance and have shaped our modern outlook. In the stricter categories of theology, his Epicureanism might have been *libido sentiendi*, the appetite for sensation; his Machiavellianism might have been *libido dominandi*, the appetite for power; and his Atheism, *libido sciendi*, the zeal for knowledge."

The book is a study of Marlowe's dramatization of these ideas. Yet Levin is never blinkered within the history of ideas as such. The plays are treated perceptively in terms of tone, texture, tension—the "New Critics" can have no quarrel here. And Levin has proper respect for the problem of genre—*Edward II* is considered as a chronicle play, *Faustus* as a morality play, and so on. There is everywhere, too, a feeling for the specifically dramatic.

But while Levin, at one level of his multiple approach, accords to each separate play and poem its rightful dignity as "thing-in-itself," he is not content to consign *Faustus* and *Tamburlaine* and the others to that vacuous verbal universe which has been conjured up for us by the latest apostles of "art for art's sake." If he "places" Marlowe in the literary tradition (the asides on Goethe and Calderón are especially illuminating), he nevertheless breaks through the exclusively literary into valid extraliterary appraisals and insights. For instance, he does not regard as exclusively literary the fact that Marlowe's overreaching heroes live off the ethic of Shakespeare's villains. Nor is it here a literary matter only that Marlowe's symbolization of the royal crown is usually as blasphemous as Shakespeare's is sacral. Rather, Levin puts his finger on a conflict, religious, moral, political, at the very core of the Renaissance culture, a conflict which informs the work of art, but which is engendered beyond it and beneath it, a conflict not yet resolved in the culture which proceeds from the Renaissance.

For Levin, and correctly, sees Marlowe as a "prophet" of the modern dilemma. "While science, capitalism, imperialism were at the beginning of their modern development, Marlovian tragedy was able to project the inordinate courses they

would pursue through Marlowe's insight into the wayward individualist and into the life that is lived—"without control."

In short, Levin's "placing" of Marlowe in the main drift of the West is admirable. But it is only fair to add as coda that Levin is far more sympathetic to the Marlovian heresies than I can be (is he not more than half in love with this uneaseful death?). The danger signal is there for all to see in his unqualified approval of the I. A. Richards dictum that "tragedy is only possible to a mind which is for the moment agnostic or Manichean." (A good dose of the doctrine of analogy might well be prescribed.) Levin seems to assume that "religion itself is a substitute for precise knowledge of the human condition" and that "tragedy is the ripened growth of a humanistic, as distinguished from a theological, culture." Such assumptions are at the very least questionable and they force one to question Levin's final evaluation of the role of his mighty "overreacher." Fortunately one need not share these assumptions to take profit from the book.

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DANTE'S DRAMA OF THE MIND. A MODERN READING OF THE PURGATORIO. By Francis Fergusson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. x, 232 p.

With this significant book, Dante's American pilgrimage has come to an original milestone—the *Purgatorio* interpreted by a sophisticated professor of English, who is a critic with taste. He humbly declares that he is leaving aside the whole of Dante scholarship; but he nevertheless climbs the mountain with guides, mainly Auerbach and Singleton.

Can an immanent interpretation with so light a historical baggage achieve new insights? The answer must certainly be yes in all cases where structural questions are studied, where the harmonious interweaving of recurrent themes and motives or the overlapping of architecture and texture are considered. The same holds true for the exploration of Dante's lyrical sensibility, his landscapes, and his symbolism insofar as it can be approached through the modern concept of ambiguity. Bergsonian and Proustian interpretations of the atmosphere of the *Antipurgatorio* as the pathos of human time past, and of the *Paradiso terrestre* as the calm of time redeemed, are truly helpful. Even more daring *rapprochements*, such as the concept of Earthly Paradise as a landscape painted by Dalí, are also illuminating.

But Fergusson's "careful midwifery" in the *Lectura Dantis* neglects certain aspects essential to the comprehension of the poem. The sacramental element of the *Purgatorio* is seen so dimly that the seven P's (for *Peccata*) on Dante's forehead are reduced to three and the function of the seven angels who efface them is never mentioned. The third-hand information (through Auerbach) on the relation between *figura* and fulfillment, as reflected in the Old Dispensation and the Church as well as in Dante's poetization of it, is too closely repeated page after page. Firsthand information from St. Paul and the Fathers would have yielded more authentic doctrine on type and antitype. What Professor Fergusson explains at length on pp. 139-140 then could have been reduced to a simple proportion, such as *Arbor Paradisi* : Cross (*Arbor nobilis*) :: Eve : Mary (*Eva:Ave*) :: First Adam : Second Adam (Christ). Fergusson's enthusiasm over his newly discovered figuralism makes him believe firmly in Dante's alleged "Allegory of the Theologians"; this he takes at face value from Singleton without suspecting that L. Pietrobono has advanced serious objections to the source of this theory, namely the letter to Can Grande della Scala attributed to Dante (see *Giornale Dantesco*, XL, 1931, 1-51).

Thus becoming entangled in Dante scholarship against his will, Fergusson extricates himself by asking the pragmatic question: What can all these analogies mean to the modern agnostic who is unable (p. 3) to accept the "Christian theory" (p. 113) or even to believe that any professing Christian living today "with the naïveté of faith" (p. 182) could believe in such relationships (p. 133). Why then does he give so much stress to these analogies? Because figuralism was a mode of understanding history by a time-bound belief, and suggests to the twentieth century that it should find its own methodical way of interpreting history. This philosophy of history would be conditioned by the radical change in belief but would be anchored in the Christian humanistic tradition in contradistinction to Marxism. I for one think that figuralism gives us something quite different: "Le sentiment presque physique de la présence du surnaturel."

We may follow Fergusson a moment along the borderline of poetry and history, but, in order that the aesthetic-poetical aspect of the poem will never be lost, it will be well to remember that the *Purgatorio* belongs also to the history of piety. Dante's Gothic century is less a Christocentric than a Marian century and his poem, which has not one single clear Eucharistic allusion, is full of vibrant praise of the Virgin (mentioned thirteen times in the *Purgatorio*). It is therefore unfortunate that Fergusson takes over Singleton's analogy of Beatrice to Christ (p. 181) instead of to Mary, the obvious prototypical *donna gentil nel ciel* (*Inf.* II, 94).

Fergusson is so fascinated by the supposed Christocentricity of the *Purgatorio* that almost everything becomes a figure of Christ. The expression, "Contra il piacer mio trassi dell'acqua non sazia la spugna" (p. 111), is said to contain an analogy to the sponge lifted up to Christ on the Cross and to reflect the pilgrim's "tiny sacrifice" of answering against his will as an "image of the Divine Pattern." The sponge figure is supposed to foreshadow the "figure" of the earthquake at the release of the "risen" Statius. But here we have the erroneous implication that the earthquake in the "Divine Pattern" occurred on the day of the Resurrection, not on the day of the Crucifixion. The figuralist neophyte cannot be supposed to know of the use of Ps. 75:9-10 as Easter Offertory. We are told further that not only Statius but "all the people he meets here are figures of the risen Christ" (p. 113). Statius, with Virgil and Dante, certainly is reminiscent of Christ accompanying the two disciples to Emmaus (p. 117); but—*incredible dictu*—Christ in the form of the griffin in Earthly Paradise is said to be the fulfillment of the risen (*sic!*) Beatrice (p. 190).

Thus Mr. Fergusson sees too much on the periphery, too little in the center. He tells us much about Dante's visionary journey as a symbol, but he does not tell us anything about the function of the greatest symbol ever created, Dante's Purgatorial Mountain. It is here that earthly spiritual life and eschatological reality coincide in their reciprocity and identity, the mountain to be climbed being a sign of two spiritual realities—the ascetic-mystical capacity which God grants to the soul here, and the distillation of Love there, which Beatrice (Caritas stepping aside, according to Singleton) elicits as the distant goal to make the lover worthy of the Beloved (God).

Again the explanation for the existential vividness of this marvelous symbol lies in the history of piety. In the fourteenth century, through the mystics, Purgatory becomes a paramount preoccupation of the Western Church. Dante paves the way to the classical treatise on Purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa; he trembles in his human essence when he thinks as a sinner of his spiritual destiny after death, which to him is as living a reality as his life in the flesh: "Chè già lo incarco di laggiù mi pesa" (*Purg.*, XIII, 138). If Professor Fergusson had started from this symbol-reality, he could not have made such baffling remarks

as these: "I do not think that Dante believed he had actually descended to the center of the earth and risen beyond the sun" (p. 227); or "The moon is not a metaphor unless the whole journey is" (p. 225); or "The *Paradiso terrestre* was regarded as a real place and Dante seems to combine this tradition with his own poetry" (p. 231). A perusal of A. Camilli, "Le figurazioni allegoriche," *Studi Danteschi*, XXVIII (1949), 197-215, would have been helpful here.

Whoever is concerned with treating Dante's spiritual life without losing sight of Dante's sensibility should not allow it to fade into a half-intellectual, half-romantic "inner" life (pp. 21, 45, 58, 62, 158) through the use of such terms as "sub-conscious," "natural sanctity," "to reach the better" (p. 81), or "the good" (p. 83), which smack of German idealism and Goethe's *Faust*. I am aware that Mr. Fergusson also uses the whole analogy of St. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. But it is used, and well used, only for structural-technical purposes and to serve the Fergussonian distinction of types of awareness on the four days of travel through Purgatory.

A Singletonian pattern which works out very well is Fergusson's splitting of Dante into the pilgrim "who learns, errs and changes before our eyes" and the glossing poet. This pattern is impressively developed in a personal way; Dante the wanderer grows in insights from childish awareness to adolescent intelligence, mature faith, and a new childlike vision. A relationship is established between Dante the wanderer's fourfold growth on his magic mountain tour, and Daniélou's "progressive Revelation of God" (p. 185). The presentation of the *Purgatorio* as a *Bildungsroman* steeped in lyrical experiences (e.g., the erotic dream "of the mature male," p. 108), appears to be a felicitous interpretation, which "clicks." Somewhat strained, however, are the alleged change in Virgil's role from father to coach to companion and the distribution of the literal, moral, allegorical, and preanagogical senses to the respective days of the Purgatorial excursion.

Many pages reveal a deep poetic understanding, other pages explain pertinently the problem of humanism as "built into the very structure of the Mountain path" (p. 49). As long as Fergusson remains an impressionistic or descriptive critic, I gladly accept most of his daring symbolic speculations, e.g., the darkness of the smoke on the terrace of the angry as related to the political "darkness" of Italy, mentioned in quite different words by the "angry" Marco Lombardo, and to the "darkness" of discursive reason which will recede before the new light ("l'albor che per lo fumo raia," XVI, 142)—interpreted by Fergusson as *nous* versus the darker *episteme*. And I admire the symbolic exploitation of the "deceitful brilliance of the moon" (p. 97) as the accomplice of dreams of lust and its white light as announcing the nightly relapse of the soul into the body (p. 95) and "the anarchic power of many forms of love in the human clay."

However, when Fergusson takes historical lines, he becomes intricate and unconvincing. All in all, we possess in Fergusson's *Drama of the Mind* (whose title was inspired by Henry James' coinage, "Drama of the Consciousness") an interpretation of the *Purgatorio* in which overdramatization somewhat jeopardizes the minor tone which Dante purposely gave this *cantica*. But this exaggeration is compensated by the special competence of the author of *The Idea of a Theater* for detecting tragic tensions, psychological conflicts (*agones*), crises, peripeties, and denouements which certainly are there and which actually arouse pity and fear (see p. 57) in readers more "engaged" than Professor Fergusson is himself. And it is well that a *Purgatorio* should produce a catharsis in the reader.

Here we are reminded of the best reason that Professor Fergusson gives to justify his dramatization of the *Purgatorio*, namely its subject matter, "that sub-rational or superrational love-driven dying-to-live, which is both tragic and Christian." No one should say that the book is not "scholarly" enough. Such a

critic should be condemned to read Giuseppe Troccoli, *Il Purgatorio dantesco. Studio critico* (Florence, 1951), for "correct" information; he would soon fall asleep. Fergusson keeps us awake, very much awake. This is a great merit.

H. H.

GEORGE GISSING: GRAVE COMEDIAN. By Mabel Collins Donnelly. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954. viii, 245 p.

George Gissing has for years been regarded with a certain inert respect as one of the significant minor masters of English fiction in its period of susceptibility to European influences at the end of the Victorian era. Such a reputation is no guarantor of readers. With the probable exception of *New Grub Street*, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and the famous study of Dickens, the bulk of Gissing's work, which includes twenty-two novels, is for the most part neglected by publishers, readers, and scholars alike. Gissing deserves better, and Dr. Donnelly, in her persuasive and levelheaded critical biography, has endeavored to see that he gets more attention.

The nearest approach to a full-length biography of Gissing hitherto published is Morley Roberts' *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*. Although this garrulous *mélange* of fact, legend, and personal impression is true to the larger patterns of Gissing's life, it is nevertheless based upon memory rather than investigation and is written in an infuriating novelistic guise that employs teasingly suggestive fictional names for nearly every important individual that crossed Gissing's path. Clearly there was a need for research and a cool head, and Dr. Donnelly has answered this need. She has made use of previously untapped manuscript sources in order to provide the essential facts of Gissing's restless and frequently miserable life, and she has enriched her biography with detailed analyses of his major works.

Dr. Donnelly's criticism is based upon standards established by Gissing himself in such mature works as *Eve's Ransom* and *The Whirlpool*, where a cool, sometimes chilly, moral and psychological realism is brought to bear upon characters distinguished chiefly by their frustrations. Such standards encourage precise and businesslike analysis and this Dr. Donnelly has supplied in abundance. There may be disagreement with some of her judgments, but few will accuse her of undue bias in favor of her author as she follows his by no means steady progress away from his clumsy and frequently strident earlier style. There is, however, an occasional sense of incompleteness in Dr. Donnelly's criticism that results from her refusing at times to deal clearly and thoroughly enough with some of the issues that she herself has raised. She calls attention, for example, to Gissing's "usual paralyzing identification with the hero" (p. 5) and later insists that by such identification Gissing "spared himself the pain of insight into himself" (p. 71). This seems to me a misstatement of the problem, which is more aesthetic than psychological and concerns, not the depth of the author's insight into himself, but the autonomy of the novel as a work of art.

Isabel Clarendon, one of Dr. Donnelly's favorites, suffers from the fact that its hero's appalling inertia and despair, vividly presented as they are, seem to spring from sources outside the novel. It is as though Gissing had made an unsuccessful effort to amalgamate the realistic novel and the Dostoevskian confession. The same difficulty is encountered in even so superior a work as *The Whirlpool*. Harvey Rolfe may be "the most thoughtful and honest person in the novel" (p. 182), but his weak acquiescence in his wife's nervous pursuit of publicity seems too obvious a projection of Gissing's own disillusioned sense of futility. Gissing, after all, established workable criteria in this matter. Edwin Reardon of *New Grub*

Street, who has much of Gissing in his temperament, is evidence that an author's use of his own traits in his hero's characterization need not be "paralyzing." Edwin Reardon is all the more effective as a contrast to the shallow and bustling Jasper Milvain precisely because he endeavors so resolutely, from motives established within the novel itself, to make the world accept him on his own terms.

Dr. Donnelly has accumulated impressive evidence of Gissing's interest in such writers as Zola, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Ibsen, and she has in some instances compared Gissing's work to theirs. Such comparisons are worthwhile in that they draw attention to the community of themes, ideas, and character types that united Gissing with these men, and I only wish that Dr. Donnelly had been a little more enterprising in this field. In her discussion of *The Whirlpool*, for example, she makes a justified comparison between Alma Rolfe and Emma Bovary and stresses Alma's greater aggressiveness and superior cunning (pp. 179-180). But are not the differences between the two characters illuminated by Gissing's comment on Ibsen, quoted by Dr. Donnelly, that "'Hedda Gabler' . . . seems to me a strangling of rich possibilities which might have been worked out in the generous scheme of a novel" (p. 207)? In depicting his neurotic heroine's progress into sordidness Gissing shows at least some of the advantages of "the generous scheme," and reveals his own gift for maintaining his individuality in thematic areas dominated by greater writers. Again, Gissing's pushing young egoists, like Jasper Milvain of *New Grub Street* and Dyce Lashmar of *Our Friend the Charlatan*, whatever their Meredithian affiliations, are of the tribe of Bazarov. They share his scorn of humanistic values, his conviction that nature is "not a temple but a workshop," and his dedication to "science." But to this ideology they add a touch of Samuel Smiles that indeed justifies Dr. Donnelly's subtitle. Such characters vindicate Gissing's membership in the European literary community by showing that his was not merely a derivative citizenship, but one based upon a clear view of his own society embodied in a valid personal style. It is ungrateful, however, to ask Dr. Donnelly for more when she has already done so much. She has provided us with the first reliable full-length biography of Gissing, as well as a study of his novels that far excels anything written hitherto.

Dr. Donnelly has included a bibliography of the principal editions of Gissing's works, a list of manuscript sources and books and articles of bibliographical interest, and a bibliography (selective, although not noted as such) of critical and bibliographical studies.

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LA CRITICA DANTESCA CONTEMPORANEA. By Aldo Vallone. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1953, 302 p.

La critica dantesca contemporanea has six chapters: "La critica idealistica," "La critica filologico-stilistica," "La critica storica," "La critica filologica," "L'interpretazione spiritualistica e morale," "La critica dantesca nel mondo." The first five chapters of the volume are composed of a number of subchapters descriptive of the tendencies within each section and a discussion of the chief exponents of these tendencies, while the final chapter contains subchapters grouped on a national basis—Germany, France, England, America, other countries.

It is natural that the survey should open with the name of Croce, since contemporary Dante criticism has been largely dominated by his ideas, as expressed in his *Estetica* (Milan, 1902) and especially in his *Poesia di Dante* (Bari, 1921). No matter what their literary creed or methodological procedure, few scholars, at least in Italy, have been wholly able to escape the influence of his thought. It

has sharpened our perceptivities and made the *Divina Commedia* (and not the *Divina Commedia* alone) for us a far richer and more beautiful work of art than it was before.

For Croce the unity of Dante's poetry, the central problem in Dante criticism, is simply "lo spirito poetico di Dante, di Dante della *Commedia*, non quello complessivo del volume suo, e il carattere di ciascuna delle tre cantiche, non si può ritrovarlo con l'analisi dei concetti dell'*Inferno*, del *Purgatorio* e del *Paradiso*, ma solo con la contemplazione della varia poesia che ciascuna di esse offre, e che, pur nella sua varietà, ha in ciascuna delle cantiche, una certa fisionomia che la differenzia" (*Poesia di Dante*, 2nd ed., 1921, p. 70). It is a perfect if narrow formulation which no one so far has been able effectively to expand or supplant. "Non un passo innanzi infatti si è compiuto su questo cammino," asserts Vallone (p. 24).

Some reaction from within the Croce circle is, however, voiced by Momigliano, who takes up the problem once more and finds the elusive unifying element in the poem in the drama of Dante as portrayed in his characters and as reflected in his *paesaggio*, a material medium suffused with psychological elements.¹ Though Momigliano fails to render his thesis acceptable, his sensitive analytical commentary in his edition of the *Divina Commedia* (Florence, 1945-47) illuminates many passages and extends the poetic horizon that had been somewhat restricted by his master.

What is said by Vallone about another close follower of Croce, F. Flora, is so engaging that it has prompted the reviewer to go to its source, the *Storia della letteratura italiana* (7th ed., Vol. I) for further amplification. It has been rewarding reading. Flora's conception of the *Divina Commedia* is that of a symphony in which all the elements—artistic sensibilities, personal and political feelings and sentiments, theology, allegory, tonality—are fused into a vast and intimately knit poetic unity. Such a view leaves but few traces of the dichotomy between structure and poetry in the poem, a radical departure from Croce, who declared that "struttura e poesia non vi si compenetrano e non si contaminano l'un l'altra, ma si alternano e si giustappongono."² It should be noted that, more than a voicing of original opinion, Flora's statement is a summation of the newer directions in Dante criticism.³ One of the novel features which he takes up is the conception of poetry as expression put to music. Less new but significant because he, a Crocian, has adopted it, is his contention that allegory is a species of metaphor, a suggestion that stems from the *idealismo attuale* school.⁴ "... I vari sensi che Dante cerca non sono altro che velocissime comparazioni: di sotto ogni allegoria potreste far apparire il nascosto 'come' della similitudine. E in quest'operazione non c'è l'intervento del freddo intelletto che vuol conferire alle parole un significato arbitrario; ma la spontanea associazione delle analogie. E ciò che talvolta chiamiamo a torto allegoria è una lingua metaforica..." (*Storia*, p. 201).

Torraca, Parodi, and Bertoni subscribe both to the theories of Croce and to those of the historical philological school, but are somehow unable to synchron-

¹ See "Il paesaggio nella *Divina Commedia*," in *Dante, Manzoni, Verga* (Messina, 1944), pp. 9-34.

² "Ancora della lettura poetica di Dante," in *Lecture di poeti e riflessioni sulla teoria e la critica della poesia* (Bari, 1950), p. 12.

³ See *Storia della lett. it.*, p. 199.

⁴ See "Ancora della lettura poetica di Dante," *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6. Croce had remarked: "Da questa scuola mi venne anche l'intelligente rimbroto che l'allegoria è una forma di metafora, della stessa natura di ogni altra, e va trattata come le altre: il che non solo era chiudere gli occhi all'evidenza antipoetica dell'allegoria, ma non saper nulla della sua genesi né della sua storia, che comincia dai filosofi ellenici interpreti di Omero."

ize these two views. The positive contributions of Bertoni lie in other fields, but Torraca and Parodi can still be consulted with a good deal of profit as regards Dante.⁵

In contrast, the output of the Crocian "left-wingers," the formal aestheticists, is of slight value, so slight that among them Vallone is able to salvage only two representatives, Cesareo⁶ and Tonelli, the latter overshadowing the former as far as Dante is concerned. In his *Dante e la poesia dell'ineffabile* (Florence, 1934) Tonelli skillfully attempts to show that the unity of the *Divina Commedia* resides in the concept of ineffability.

One of the most recent and most fruitful trends in contemporary criticism, partly a reaction to Croce, is the school of stylistic criticism headed by Spitzer. In Italy it seems to have a wider acceptance than elsewhere. A study of this type which Vallone views with approval is Malagoli's *Linguaggio e poesia nella Divina Commedia* (Genoa, 1949). This book presents proof of the compositional unity of the poem in which parts harmonize with parts and these with the whole. The study is, indeed, interesting, but somewhat mechanistic in its exposition. Less so is Malagoli's continuation, *Storia della poesia nella Divina Commedia* (Genoa, 1950), which probably reached Vallone too late for discussion in his volume.

Contini's stylistic analysis of the *Rime* (2nd ed., Turin, 1946) brings out the "inquietudine permanente" evoked by these shorter poems. After noting several imaginal affinities with the masterpiece pointed out by Contini in connection with the *canzone*, "Io son venuto al punto della rota", Vallone adds: "Meta è dunque la *Commedia*, e solo lì si nota riposato e solenne l'inquieto animo del poeta" (*op. cit.*, p. 85). This may ultimately prove true, but the evidence collected thus far does not warrant such a sweeping conclusion.

Fubini also belongs to the Spitzer group; though his Dante studies are essentially limited to the Ulysses and St. Bernard episodes of the *Divina Commedia*,⁷ they stand out as significant contributions. How effective the stylistic method is will be ascertained, however, only when it meets the crucial test of being applied to the whole of the work.

In the field of historical criticism we move neither forward nor backward with Cian's erudition,⁸ but move emphatically ahead with Vittorio Rossi and his thesis of a moral-aesthetic unity in the *Commedia*.⁹ As for Ferretti (of minor importance as compared with Rossi), Vallone chooses to center his attention upon his essay discussing an oft-debated question: "I due tempi dei sette canti dell'Inferno" in *Saggi danteschi* (Florence, 1950). This is a revamping of the volume, *I due tempi della composizione della Divina Commedia* (Bari, 1935). Taking into account the animadversions levelled at his first study, Ferretti narrows down his argument primarily to Ciacco's prophecy, placing it, and consequently the composition of the first six cantos of the *Inferno*, before the end of January 1302, a contention which is pretty thoroughly invalidated by brilliant counterargument on the part

⁵ Bertoni, *Lingua e poesia* (Florence, 1937), pp. 25-50; *Lingua e cultura* (Florence, 1939), pp. 167-222. Torraca, *Studi danteschi* (Naples, 1912); *Nuovi Studi danteschi* (Naples, 1921); and his edition of the *Divina Commedia* (Rome, 1905-07). Parodi, *Poesia e storia nella Divina Commedia* (Naples, 1920).

⁶ See Cesareo's edition of the *Vita Nuova*; and *Studi e ricerche* (Palermo, 1929), pp. 121-195.

⁷ Contained in *Due saggi danteschi* (Florence, 1951).

⁸ *Sulle orme del Veltro* (Messina, 1897); *Dante e il Piemonte* (Turin, 1921).

⁹ Cf. "La *Commedia*," in *Dante* (Milan, 1921), pp. 10-35; Rossi's edition of the *Divina Commedia* (Naples, 1923), which from *Purg.*, XXIII on is annotated by Frascino, *Scritti di critica letteraria* (Florence, 1930); various cantos in the *Lectura Dantis* series.

of Vallone. Yet, when he comes to Cerulli's *Il libro della scala e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnuole della Divina Commedia* (Madrid, 1919, 2nd ed., 1943), Vallone is persuaded that Dante was acquainted with the *Libro della scala* matter and finds a concrete demonstration of it in the horrible treatment meted out to Mohammed in *Inf.*, XXVIII, which is "senz'altro un segno che Dante voleva polemicamente reagire... all'orgogliosa esaltazione che del Profeta si faceva nel *Libro della scala*" (*op. cit.*, p. 123). The fact remains, nevertheless, that, despite all that can be said in favor of the Islamic vision as a source, the question of its impress on Dante rests on highly hypothetical assumptions. Even if we were to admit it, this kind of influence by reaction would still be suspect, since the Italian poet's attitude towards Mohammed might easily have stemmed from a variety of other factors.

Nardi, taken up in the following subchapter, has attempted to give unity to the culture and philosophy of Dante by linking them with the culture and philosophy which prevailed during the Middle Ages.¹⁰ But as to the Asin Palacios-Cerulli thesis in particular and the penetration of Mohammedan thought in general, he is skeptical regarding their direct effect upon Dante.

Though, like the *Giornale storico* and *Bullettino della Società dantesca italiana*, Barbi's *Studi danteschi* are placed in the historical category, they were also, as we might expect, the depository for studies of the new Italian school of textual philology that was formed by him. As editor of the *Studi* and as a Dantist of no mean standing, Barbi was instrumental in bringing about the most productive as well as the most important period of Dante studies which we have so far witnessed.¹¹ "Suo merito è aver tolto agli studi su Dante quel che di diletantismo e professionale perdurava ancora e dato agli stessi compostezza e metodo, rigore e disciplina storica, che via via persuadevano impudenti e politicanti in cerca di suggestioni e di effetti a guardare Dante almeno con più rispetto delle sue idee e del tempo" (p. 147). This statement also applies to the critical edition of the works of Dante published under the auspices of the Società Dantesca, an accomplishment of immeasurable significance carried out under Barbi's direction. He left an able group of Dantists—Pernicone, Maggini, Casella, Chiari, Schiaffini, and Sapegno—to continue and to develop some of the ideas which he promulgated. Incidentally, Vallone's information on Barbi's critical edition in the subchapter devoted to it is of a purely descriptive character. Had some analysis been added, the value of this section would have been materially increased.

In Chapter V, the rubric "Il dissolvimento della critica storica e l'Apollonio" furnishes us with a thumbnail evaluation of Apollonio's *Dante. Storia della Commedia* (Milan, 1951), an evaluation which is amply borne out in Vallone's appraisal of the volume. Apollonio attempts to accomplish what Zingarelli had failed to do in his massive *Dante*, that is, to find a unifying element in Dante's life and work. For him it consists of "sapienza divina."

Pietrobono chooses a similar objective and works it out with a greater degree of success. He sees the *Commedia* "come l'espressione di una mente rivolta a Dio" (p. 192). He further shows that the unity of conception of the poem stands out in the innumerable closely linked correspondences that run throughout the work. However, Pietrobono is best known for his allegorical view of the *Divina Commedia*, an "allegoria-arte, che non vive cioè come allegoria sovrapposta alla in-

¹⁰ See *Saggi di filosofia dantesca* (Rome, 1930); *Nel mondo di Dante* (Rome, 1944); *Dante e la cultura medievale* (Bari, 1949).

¹¹ Consult *Studi danteschi* (Florence, 1920); *Problemi di critica dantesca*, 1st ser. (1893-1918) (Florence, 1934); *La nuova filologia e l'edizione dei nostri classici* (Florence, 1938); *Con Dante e i suoi interpreti* (Florence, 1941); *Problemi di critica dantesca*, 2nd ser. (1920-1937) (Florence, 1941).

spirazione, ma è essa stessa idea-ispirazione del poeta" (p. 202).¹² In part he derives his stimulus from Pascoli. But, with other more rigid *Pascoliani* like Valli¹³ and Ricolfi,¹⁴ allegory is interpreted in terms of the code of the *Fedeli d'amore* and hence is shorn of most of its poetic qualities.

The problem of the resolution of Dante's moral world into poetry, though brilliantly set forth by Pietrobono, has given rise to a "residuo che stentava... a risolversi in poesia" (p. 212). Biondolillo¹⁵ follows along similar lines in his essays, but cannot make the articulation any more satisfactorily. Cosmo likewise takes up the question, and achieves better results by placing his paramount stress on the *Paradiso*; but he, too, falls short of complete persuasiveness.¹⁶ However, he laid the groundwork for Getto's "Poesia e teologia nel Paradiso di Dante" (see *Aspetti della poesia di Dante*, Florence, 1947), in which both the theological and the poetic content of the cantic are viewed as fused into a common unity. Though Vallone's enthusiasm for the Getto thesis may be justified, it is clear that the thesis has not yet been sufficiently exposed to searching critical scrutiny.

The status of Dante criticism abroad occupies a total of less than fifty pages. It is obvious that, as compared with Italy, significant scholarly contributions outside of Italy should be fewer in number. Contemporary Dantism in Germany is a continuation of a long tradition, and out of it has come Vossler, who towers above other German Dantists. The two editions of his *Dante*, one presenting the historical-philological approach and the other the Crocian approach, have influenced much of what has been done. While France has had in the past a fair number of good Dante scholars, it is only recently that Dante studies have spread into the higher academic circles. Excellent contributions have been made by Gilson, Renaudet, Pézard, Renucci, Bâtard, and others, most of them belonging to the historical-philological tradition. In England no one has appeared to replace Moore, Toynbee, Gardner, and Wickstead, but mention is made of Eliot, Whitfield, Foster, and Sayers. In America there is a rich Dante tradition represented by a number of noteworthy studies. In this section, because of their importance in the historical field, Vallone singles out and discusses approvingly at some length La Piana's *Dante's American Pilgrimage* and Friederich's *Dante's Fame Abroad*, complementary in some respects to his own survey.

Since *La critica dantesca contemporanea* is primarily an exposition of trends, it follows that only the most important contributions to Dante criticism have a sizable place in it. Yet it is apparent that, in order to preserve a certain symmetry among the parts, discussions of some striking contributions, especially those belonging to idealistic and historical criticism, have had to be abbreviated or even sacrificed. To some extent these lacunae can be filled by supplementary reading from the titles in Vallone's *Supplemento bibliografico (1921-48)* (Milan, 1949), in his additions to Zingarelli's volume, and in *Gli studi danteschi dal 1940 al 1949* (Florence, 1950). These compilations have paved the way for the later survey and have conditioned its subject matter. The great bulk of the items they contain have had more than a mere bibliographical value for their compiler; they have

¹² See *Poema sacro* (Bologna, 1915); *Saggi danteschi* (Rome, 1936).

¹³ *Il segreto della croce e dell'aquila nella Divina Commedia* (Bologna, 1922); *La chiave della Divina Commedia* (Bologna, 1926); *Il linguaggio segreto di Dante e dei Fedeli d'amore* (Rome, 1928).

¹⁴ *Studi sui Fedeli d'amore* (Genoa, 1940).

¹⁵ *L'unità spirituale della Divina Commedia* (Messina, 1948); *Dante e il suo poema* (Rome, 1948).

¹⁶ Especially, *L'ultima ascesa. Introduzione alla lettura del Paradiso* (Bari, 1946).

been read by him. For example, in the *Studi danteschi* (pp. xiii-xiv) he tells us: "Tutte le opere raccolte sono state da me lette, appuntate nelle loro parti principali, accostate alle recensioni più significative, e riassunte spesso in espressioni prese a significato del saggio e viste in relazione al pensiero dell'intero lavoro per evitare fraintendimenti dannosi e per dar misura della voce del critico." The reading of this vast mass of Danteana undoubtedly accounts for the eclectic attitude that he assumes in *La critica dantesca contemporanea*. If some of his verdicts are negative (Ferretti, Apollonio), the verdicts have been reached only after he has fairly weighed the pros and cons. Where he is in full accord with his fellow critics, we find him occasionally employing the unusual procedure of fortifying their arguments with new arguments of his own (Flora, Getto). For those seeking orientation on Dante this discriminating volume will serve as an excellent guide.

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L'ESTHÉTIQUE DES "FLEURS DU MAL": ESSAI SUR L'AMBIGUÏTÉ POÉTIQUE. By J.-D. Hubert. Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1953. 294 p. (Collection d'Études et de Documents Littéraires.)

The chief virtue of *L'Esthétique des "Fleurs du mal"* is that the author sends the reader back to the text of the poems and invites him to look at them afresh with an open mind as well as with open eyes. The principal novelty of the work, and one that should commend it to students of comparative literature, is that J.-D. Hubert has extended the critical technique of Empson to the field of French literature.

In *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1947) William Empson undertook to "tease out the meanings" of samples of poetry from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot, and explained his aesthetic experience in terms of the "ambiguities" he encountered. Since Mr. Hubert is concerned with only one author, he has not found it suitable to adopt all seven of Empson's categories. He has instead followed a procedure which Empson himself would seem to recommend (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, pp. 241-242); he has derived a comparable but more appropriate set of categories from Baudelaire's own statements on the nature of art. Then, renouncing the assistance of historical criticism for the purpose of this study, Mr. Hubert has organized his dissertation according to the kinds of "ambiguity" that might prove to be most congenial to Baudelaire: "Les ambiguïtés de rapprochement," "Les ambiguïtés surnaturalistes," etc.

For Mr. Hubert ambiguity is analogous to polyphony or even dissonance in music; it is "une multiplicité simultanée de significations." The ambiguity may arise from a simple play on words such as Baudelaire himself saw in the title of the *Fleurs du mal*. It may reside in the etymological puns which Mr. Hubert detects in the following lines from "Danse macabre":

"Elle a la *nonchalance* et la *désinvolture*
D'une coquette maigre aux airs *extravagants*."

The three words which appear in italics might, our author notes, apply to a skeleton in a *danse macabre* as well as to a coquette, if one but kept their original meaning in mind. The ambiguities which Mr. Hubert perceives often stem from a more complex situation than that found in the preceding sample. In "L'Invitation au voyage," for example, he discovers an implied comparison of

three elements: the beloved, a landscape, and Dutch art as practiced by Vermeer. Mr. Hubert cites the opening lines of the poem:

"Mon enfant, ma sœur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux,
Brillant à travers leurs larmes."

He then points out: "On expliquerait assez malaisément l'expression *là-bas*, à moins de supposer que les deux amants sont en train d'évoquer ou de contempler des tableaux représentant ce pays merveilleux... qui n'est pas entièrement géographique. L'emploi du terme *ciels* à la place de *cieux* possède le mérite de l'exactitude: les *cieux* représentés en peinture s'appellent en effet des *ciels*. La comparaison, en apparence si simple, entre la femme et un paysage, devient ainsi un triple rapprochement entre la femme, le paysage, et l'art pictural."

If one recognizes this threefold comparison, the remainder of the poem and especially the refrain,

"Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté,"

take on additional meaning, as the author explains in considerable detail.

The examples of Mr. Hubert's technique that I have cited demonstrate the utility of his work. The method he employs is, of course, no less fallible than any other, and it has, as Empson himself recognized (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, p. xii), its dangers. The search for multiple meanings may at times reveal more of the critic's sensitivity than that of the author under consideration. It is fair to point out here that Mr. Hubert has tried to escape this pitfall by deriving his critical principles from Baudelaire's own writings; but this reviewer must confess that, in the explanation of an important poem such as "Correspondances," his method does not seem to bring the reader appreciably closer to the poet's mind. Another difficulty encountered in this kind of criticism is that it simply cannot shed light on certain aspects of an author's art. There are poems, as Mr. Hubert concedes, in which the critic is hard pressed to find ambiguities; there are others in which the biographical method would admittedly be helpful.

But, even though Mr. Hubert's approach does not, in this reviewer's judgment, seem broad enough to explain Baudelaire's art fully, this *Essai sur l'ambiguïté poétique* is a useful work that should stimulate a new, richer, and more expectant reading of the *Fleurs du mal*. The true value of Mr. Hubert's contribution perhaps becomes apparent when one recalls Henri Peyre's complaint (*Connaissance de Baudelaire*, Paris, 1951, p. 46) that the French educational system has not produced "des critiques mieux enclins à sonder dans leurs recoins les textes mêmes des auteurs." Mr. Hubert has scrutinized the text of the *Fleurs du mal*, and his readers will doubtless do likewise.

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FRÜHE EPIK WESTEUROPAS UND DIE VORGESCHICHTE DES NIBELUNGENLIEDES.

By Kurt Wais. Erster Band. Mit einem Beitrag von Hugo Kuhn: Brunhild und das Krimhildlied. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953. 211 p.

Two strong impressions emerge from the attentive perusal of this admirable study: (1) there are still new worlds to conquer, even in realms of scholarship that have been seemingly worked to exhaustion; (2) in comparative-literature research, the emphasis must lie more and more on the word "comparative." Few literary phenomena, it seems, are really isolated; conversely, the wider the sweep of the survey, the greater is our likelihood of achieving a real understanding of any development that is truly significant. It is by no means without importance that a sort of scholarly colloquium (see p. 29) aided in shaping the form and the substance of this book.

Considering the numbers and the calibre of the scholars who have devoted years of time and thousands of printed pages to the study of the *Nibelungenlied* and its baffling problems, I rubbed my eyes when I read (p. 210): "Nicht alle, wohl aber die wesentlichen Unklarheiten über die Geschichte des Nibelungenstoffes sind damit beseitigt." I am convinced, however, that Kurt Wais has indeed succeeded in doing away with all the major perplexities involving this fascinating complex of history, legend, and phantasy. His success in doing so, to be sure, derives in no little degree from what may be called a collaborative effort, since he has been able to draw on no less than five non-German (three of them non-Germanic) treatments of the subject matter: Hungarian, Old Spanish, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, and Cymric. Some of this material had been known but misused or ignored; Wais's contribution lies in the perceptive re-examination of *all* the evidence—the comparative principle—in a fresh attempt to make partial obscurities, set side by side, superimposed, or added together, produce new and illuminating syntheses. It is characteristic of him that by reading some 700 pages of R. C. Boer's completely discredited *Untersuchungen* he found eleven pages containing a substantial contribution to the establishment of a highly probable "Lay of Brunhild."

It would be quite out of the question, in a review of this scope, to deal in any detail with Wais's wide-ranging studies. I shall merely indicate the cardinal principles which characterize his procedure and win the reader's confidence. First, he starts with the assumption, which appears to be valid for all early Germanic epic poetry, that in every case an historic incident lies at the heart of the original narrative. Applying this principle in the present case, and searching the historic records more widely than his predecessors—which is also done by Hugo Kuhn in the short but weighty article prefixed to Wais's book—he has been able to glean not a few hitherto disregarded items which lend plausibility to various of his constructions. Second, in the main he attaches little importance to single recurrent motifs; parallel features, however, take on significance when they are grouped, especially if they occur in the same sequence; if the sequence is of considerable length, the possibility of independent creation may be safely rejected. Third, in surveying groups of narratives which might be thought to have some connection with each other, he looks first for elements which are common to the entire group, rightly inferring that such correspondence indicates a derivation from something else. Fourth, only rarely does he resort to hypothesis. Instead, he carries admitted or undeniable fact to its remotest possible bounds and then sets up alternative possibilities, which are carefully scrutinized and weighed. When a conjecture is hazarded, commonly nothing essential depends on it. I admire this procedure particularly in Wais's examination of *Finnesburh* and the corresponding section of *Beowulf*; what this seemingly unpromising (and often discussed) material is made to yield is most impressive.

In one matter I find Wais disappointingly inconsistent. The one major personality in the *NL* who remains totally unaccounted for, although he has a role of great importance to play, is Rüdiger. Over forty years ago, in an article published in *Paul und Braunes Beiträge*, I built up a strong case for the Spanish hero Rodrigo Díaz as the source for this figure in the *NL*. In view of Wais's insistence on historic sources for all important phenomena, it seems strange that he does not even mention this theory, which Menéndez Pidal recognizes as the only one that has so far been put forth anywhere. Yet Wais has demonstrated a close connection between Spanish and Germanic epics, and he records without dissent the view of H. Schneider that "der Hagensohn müsse als Leihgabe aus der spanischen Epik nach Nordeuropa gewandert sein" (p. 154). (Since writing the above, I have learned from Wais that he had overlooked my article; it is to be hoped that he will refer to it in his second volume.)

I noted a few misprints: Kitiker, p. 22; gemacint, p. 134; Krimhidlied, p. 185.

I consider it highly desirable that the second volume of this important work, which bids fair to be no less illuminating than the first, should include a good index covering both volumes.

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HET BOSKEN EN HET THEATRE. By Jan Van der Noot. Inleiding en Aantekeningen van W. A. P. Smit, met medewerking van W. Vermeer. Amsterdam and Antwerp: Uitgegeven voor de Stichting "Onze Oude Letteren" door de Wereldbibliotheek, 1953. 369 p.

Students of old Dutch literature will welcome this first (letterpress) reprint of Jan Van der Noot's earliest volume of collected poems, *Het Bosken* ("The Grove" or "Little Woodland"), and his emblem book, *Het Theatre*, the English version of which, *The Theatre for Worldlings*, containing verse translations by Edmund Spenser, is well known to English scholars.

Prepared with extraordinary breadth of scope and unstinting generosity, the edition before us offers much more than the mere texts of the Dutch works. On pages facing the "Epigrammes" and "Sonets" in *Het Theatre*, the reader will find the poems by Petrarch, Marot, and Du Bellay which Van der Noot translated; and in *Het Bosken* Ronsard is frequently represented in this manner and Baif occasionally, while *Les Psaumes de David*, rhymed by Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze for singing to the lute, is reprinted opposite Van der Noot's translation, and is preceded by liberal citations from the earlier Dutch rendering (1566) made by Peter Datheen, to which Van der Noot was also indebted. By means of this device the Brabant poet stands revealed as an exponent of the "nieuwe stijl" introduced or revived by Marot and the Pléiade bards, who, in turn, sought inspiration and method from the Petrarch of the *Canzoniere*.

Nothing relevant is overlooked in this feast for students of comparative literature. The source material used to fashion certain poems in *Het Bosken* is discovered in Alciati's *Emblemata*, and four copperplate illustrations are reproduced (from the Antwerp edition of 1581), accompanied by Alciati's Latin verses and parts of his Latin commentary on each of the "emblems" in question (pp. 116-121). Alciati's influence on the Dutch poet is thus made evident—Van der Noot may have perused the *Emblemata* in Plantin's edition, Antwerp, 1565. Moreover, the model which determined the peculiar make-up of *Het Theatre*—graphic little allegories in poetic form, emblematic illustrations, prose commentary—is here brought to light.

The copious footnotes are divided about equally between explanatory com-

ments and prose renderings in modern Dutch of the more archaic passages of the texts. In his excellent introduction Dr. Smit wisely rejects the temptation to undertake a biographical study of the poet, a task long ago performed so ably by August Vermeylen in his *Leven en Werken van Jonker Jan Van der Noot* (Antwerp, 1899). He concerns himself rather with such matters as a census and description of the known copies of the first editions, an evaluation of the important bibliographical works, and a discussion of the great variety of poetic genres and verse forms used by Van der Noot in *Het Bosken*, as well as of the literary influences to which the poet submitted.

Since neither *Het Bosken* nor *Het Theatre* was issued with any indication of date and place of publication or the printer's name, Dr. Smit addresses himself to these problems. Like his colleagues in Holland and other countries, he had accepted the prevailing belief that *Het Bosken* was Van der Noot's first published volume, put forth in Antwerp about 1565, and that *Het Theatre* followed a year to two later, also printed in Antwerp, it was supposed—or, alternatively, the composition done there and the type carried to London by the emigré author. Now, through the efforts of the English bibliographer, F. S. Ferguson, a double triumph is scored on behalf of the comparatively new discipline of "bibliotics," the study of bookmaking in all its phases: paper, type fonts, printers' devices, ornamental initials, colophons, etc. Dr. Smit accepts the findings which Mr. Ferguson communicated to him (1) that *Het Bosken* was printed in London by Henry Bynneman; (2) that *Het Theatre* was printed in London in 1568 by John Day, who later in the same year issued a French translation, *Le Théâtre*.

Following certain bits of internal evidence adduced long ago by the eminent scholar, Albert Verwey,¹ but hitherto strangely disregarded, the publication date of *Het Bosken* is here set in late 1570 or early 1571, shortly before Van der Noot left England for the continent. The title of the work has usually been traced to Ronsard's *Le Bocage Royal* (derived, in turn, from Statius' *Silvae*); but Professor Smit and Dr. Vermeer point out that this collection of Ronsard's poems was not completed until 1584. On the other hand, *Les quatre premiers livres des Odes... Ensemble son Bocage* was published in 1550 and *Le Bocage de Pierre de Ronsard* in 1555. From either of these Van der Noot is likely to have borrowed the title for his own collected volume of poems.

To the student of English literature, *Het Theatre* is by far the more important of the two works under consideration, not only because it is the first emblem book published in England but also because of Edmund Spenser's relation to the English version, *The Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*, printed by Henry Bynneman in 1569.² Why an "emblem book" rather than just a book with illustrations? The differentiating factor is the close mating of poems and pictures, the former embodying moral or meditative themes which the pictorial presentations recreated for the eye. Van der Noot had chosen two sets of poems or "visions" dealing with the general topic of "the overthrow of pomp and pride," "the downfall of imperial power," "the vanity of earthly monuments." There were six "epigrams" by Petrarch and eleven "sonnets" from Joachim Du Bellay's *Songe ou Visions* attached to his *Antiquitez de Rome*. These Van der Noot translated into Dutch, adding four sonnets of his own composition, based on appropriate passages in St. John's Revelation. Of the four apocalyptic sonnets Dr. Smit

¹ In a letter of Nov. 13, 1895, addressed to August Vermeylen, printed on pp. 364-365 of the book under review. See also pp. 16-20. Verwey was the editor of *Gedichten van Jonker van der Noot* (Amsterdam, 1895).

² Published in facsimile by Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints (New York, 1936) and again in 1939 with an Introduction by Louis S. Friedland and a Bibliographical Note by William A. Jackson.

speaks in terms of high praise (p. 45): "they belong with the best Van der Noot ever produced. This is especially true of the last two of these poems."

All in all, omitting the first of the Du Bellay sonnets as being introductory and not a "vision," twenty illustrations were called for, which were duly designed and etched on copperplates. They were reproduced from the same plates in the French edition, and copied on wood—most of them in reverse—to make the woodcuts of the English and German editions. Who was the artist-designer of the copperplates? Dr. Smit turns the problem over to a colleague in the art department of the University of Utrecht, who names Marcus Gheraerts the Elder. We cannot take space here for an adequate discussion of the matter; the present reviewer merely states his conviction that Lucas de Heere³ has a far sounder claim to the dubious honor—dubious because the copperplates lack clarity of outline and are in the main carelessly executed, much more so, it happens, than some of the woodcuts. The identity of the copyist who made the woodcuts is unknown.

Now that a reprint of the *editio princeps* of the *Theatre* is available, the reader is enabled to draw comparisons between it and the English version. He will note the omission in the latter of much of the commendatory material present in the Dutch work: a prose laudation by Gerardus Goosenius, dated July 20, 1568; a Dutch poem by the same, replaced in the English edition by a Latin octet; a long Dutch poem by Lucas de Heere, "Op de Visionen van mijn Heere Vander Noot." Closing the prefatory matter in the Dutch work is the author's prose dedication to "Heer Rogier Martens," Knight and Lord Mayor of London, dated September 18, 1568. The French and the English editions substitute for this a lengthy prose "Epistle" addressed to Queen Elizabeth. By the time the French version was ready for the press, Sir Roger Martin (knighted on March 14, 1568) had completed his twelve months' tenure of the post and had been succeeded by a new Lord Mayor who, as was customary each year, took the oath of office on Simon and Jude's Day, October 28.

Of Sir Roger Martin it needs to be said that he was a member of an old Suffolk family, a son of Lawrence Martin come to London from Long Melford, Suffolk—not, as legend has it, "himself a Fleming,"⁴ or possibly "of Dutch descent."⁵ The mistake may have arisen initially through Van der Noot's spelling of his patron's name.

It is evident that years of patient and devoted research went into the making of this edition of two important books produced during the Dutch Renaissance, one of which was destined to exercise a widespread influence. Dr. W. A. P. Smit well deserves thanks and congratulations on the successful completion of an arduous task which is sure to prove of the greatest benefit to scholars everywhere who concern themselves with the literature of the sixteenth century.

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³ An opinion shared by the historian of Dutch literature, E. Rombauts, in *Geschiedenis van de Letterkunde der Nederlanden* ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1944), III, 132.

⁴ Harold Stein, *Studies in Spenser's Complaints* (New York, 1934), p. 112. Dr. Stein informs me that he "picked up the idea . . . from some reasonably standard reference work."

⁵ Louis S. Friedland, *Theatre for Worldlings* (New York, 1939), p. x. I acknowledge with chagrin my part in helping disseminate a long-established error which a little critical investigation would have corrected, as it did eventually, in time to prevent Dr. Smit from repeating it on the basis of "authority." See Bryan l'Anson, *History of the Martyn or Martin Family* (London, 1935), pp. 220-222; William Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London*, I, 248.

DANTE STUDIES I. *COMMEDIA: ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE*. By Charles S. Singleton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954. viii, 98 p.

The title of Professor Singleton's book is accurate—he is really concerned with the structure of the *Divine Comedy*, not with the mechanical outlines which have been so often and so ably set forth, nor with the elucidation of details, but with fundamental problems of Dante's methods and the cognate problems of his faith and epistemology. "It is the chief and unifying thesis of the pages that follow," Professor Singleton writes in his Preface, "that Dante's poetry, in the *Divine Comedy*, is a supreme example of 'imitation,' that his work was deliberately fashioned as an analogue of that great 'poem' which is the created universe as the Middle Ages conceived it." His book is thus one of those very rare and valuable works which embody a fresh view of the ancient masterpiece. How often does one find anything on Dante which seeks to answer the questions a contemporary reader must ask? Professor Singleton asks and answers the right questions with learning, literary sophistication, and candor; his book is indispensable both for *dantisti* and for unspecialized amateurs of the *Comedy*.

The first three chapters are entitled respectively "Allegory," "Symbolism," and "The Pattern at the Center," and each of these contains close analyses of portions of the text. The fourth, "Substance of Things Seen," explores the general problem of the relation between Dante's faith and his extraordinarily concrete, realistic style. Each chapter has ample and very pertinent notes; and there is an Appendix on the two main types of allegory recognized by Dante, that of the poets and that of the theologians—a matter of great importance for the understanding of the *Comedy*.

"Allegory" treats the relation between the literal subject of the poem, the journey beyond the grave, and its "allegorical" or spiritual subject, man as subject to God's justice. To introduce and illustrate this difficult and many-sided topic Professor Singleton uses chiefly the first two cantos of the *Inferno*, wherein Dante, with the most delicate and conscious art, leads the reader from the real poet, speaking directly to the reader of the metaphorical "journey of our life," to the different reality of Dante's unique fictive journey beyond the grave. The analysis of these cantos from this point of view illuminates the work of the poet, helps us to see what is going on in the *making* of the poem. It also serves as a natural introduction to the strategies employed by Dante in the *Comedy* as a whole.

In "Symbolism" Professor Singleton uses chiefly Casella's song (*Purg.*, II) and the confrontation of Satan (*Inf.*, XXXIV) for purposes of illustration. In both instances we are given fine readings of the passages themselves, elucidated with quotations from other parts of the poem and from some of the masters (notably St. Augustine) from whom Dante himself learned his art and his psychology. The general point here is that Dante's symbolism, more than that of any other writer, was based upon a deep grasp of the principle of analogy. It is therefore to be sharply distinguished from the "allegory" of a work like the *Roman de la rose*; and within Dante's own masterful use of symbolism we must recognize a whole repertory of attitudes and techniques. At one end of the spectrum there is the common sign language of the tradition, based on accepted interpretations of Scripture; at the other there is what Dunbar has called the "insight symbol," which is akin to the ahistoric symbols of primitive peoples and to the evocative imagery of Renaissance and modern poetry. Anyone who reads this chapter with care will understand Dante's virtuosity better, and beware thenceforth of generalizing about his symbolism.

"The Pattern at the Center" is concerned chiefly with the pageant which brings Beatrice before us at the top of the Mount of Purgatory (*Purg.*, XXX);

but because this episode is perhaps (as Professor Singleton believes) the hinge on which the whole infinitely complex movement of the *Comedy* turns, his analysis of it throws light on the structure of the whole fictive journey. The pageant is of course packed full of signs and symbols of concentrated meaning; it is shorthand for a whole Christian philosophy of history, and laden with the echoing figures of an ancient, triumphant, and unified tradition. The meanings which the Middle Ages might have understood in this sign language have been, and are being, explored by many scholars, and Singleton is well aware of their results. But he proceeds to show the relation between the philosophical and theological structure of the episode—what might be called the static conceptualized blueprints—and the dramatic unfolding of the pageant as Dante the Pilgrim (and the reader, who shares his point of view) directly experience it. He thus does justice (in principle at least) both to the motionless, intelligible frames which Dante used, and to the dramatic form, which is moving and dynamic, and has its being in the temporal sequence of the poem itself. To my mind this is the great value of Singleton's work; he understands Dante not only as a theologian, or the heir of theologians, but as a poet also. But I fear those who insist on reading Dante with the spectacles of modern positivism will be dismayed by this approach.

In "Substance of Things Seen" Professor Singleton tackles the tough questions which must trouble a modern reader again and again—those of the nature of Dante's religious faith, of his faith as a poet, and of the relations between the two loyalties or beliefs. He emerges with the formula, *Fides quaerens visionem; praecedit fides, sequitur visio*. But it would not do to offer this formula, suggestive as it is, as the upshot of the discussion; it is the discussion itself which is valuable. There the matter is subtly turned from side to side, as some bridge is sought from our awareness to Dante's awareness. The puzzling differences and the equally puzzling kinship between Dante's realism and symbolism and the realisms and symbolisms of our own faithless age are always the issue, sometimes by implication, sometimes explicitly.

Professor Singleton writes with great care, but his matter is dense, and one sometimes wishes that he would explain at more length. It would be possible to quarrel with him on matters of detail, emphasis, and the like. But such criticism would be inappropriate in a review of a book of this kind. For, though it is written with full scholarly responsibility, it is a book of essays in the best sense of that word—the chapters are essays to throw light on fundamental problems of structure, which, because they are fundamental, are perennial, and must evoke other essays from other points of view in other times. Suffice it to say that Professor Singleton's essays succeed; they make the great poem newly readable in our time.

F. F.

HARVARD SLAVIC STUDIES. Edited by Horace G. Lunt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Vol. I (1953), vi, 396 p. Vol. II (1954), vi, 390 p.

These collections of scholarly studies and essays are the first two volumes in a new series, sponsored jointly by the Harvard Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Mid-European Studies Center of the National Committee for a Free Europe. The bulk of the contributors are scholars associated with Harvard, but the long and distinguished list of authors includes also a number of Slavists from other major American universities or research centers (e.g., California, Dumbarton Oaks, Michigan, Wisconsin, Yale), as well as from Oxford, Paris, and Geneva.

The range of material covered on nearly 800 pages encompasses subjects so

diverse as the early history of the Slavic Church and modern Czech criticism, the political ideology of Muscovite Russia and the literary craft of Ivan Bunin. Many of these seemingly disparate explorations converge toward a broad common theme which the editorial statement identifies in part as that of "the inter-relations of Slavic cultures and the mutual influences between Slavs and the rest of the world."

Roman Jakobson's lengthy essay, "The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature," highlights this underlying unity and thus provides something of a rationale for the entire series. Jakobson reopens the question of the "common denominator" of Slavic literatures. He recalls the controversy stirred up during the period between the two wars by the inquiry into the "historical significance and extent of the Slavic communality." Some scholars, e.g., A. Meillet, Baudoin de Courtenay, N. S. Trubetzkoy, saw Slavic unity as primarily, or exclusively, a matter of linguistic affinity. ("Language, and only language," said Trubetzkoy, "binds the Slavs together.") Others, such as A. Brueckner and F. Wollman, preferred to speak of a distinctively Slavic mentality, temperament, or world outlook.

Jakobson has little use for the vague notion of *âme slave*. Yet he is willing to go beyond the narrowly linguistic criteria. More exactly, while accepting the "close kinship of Slavic languages" as the most tangible sign of Slavic "communality," Jakobson insists that this position has important implications for Slavic literary history which have hitherto been largely ignored. "Poetry," he argues, "is self-focused verbal behavior," the mode of discourse making a most concentrated use of verbal structures, of linguistic affinities and distinctions. Consequently, the fundamental similarity of Slavic linguistic material—whether a matter of a common patrimony or of "convergent" developments—was bound to give rise to a parallelism of formal devices "utilized in the poetry of diverse Slavic peoples."

Jakobson tests this hypothesis by exploring the verbal substratum of Slavic poetry at various levels—the phonetic, the morphological, the syntactic, and the lexical. Some of the most interesting passages in his study have to do with the poetic uses of Slavic inflectional patterns ("etymological figures," etc.) and with the way in which the distinction between the imperfective and the perfective aspect becomes in Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman* a dramatic contrast, an integral element of poetic narration. This effect, insists Jakobson, can be easily transposed into any other Slavic language but is bound to be lost in German or English.

In discussing the evolution of poetry in Slavic countries and its susceptibility to outside influences and stimuli, Jakobson calls into question the existence of specifically "Slavic variants of major literary styles, such as Classicism, Romanticism, Realism and Symbolism, in the field of artistic ideology and artistic form, in those cases where form is not linked with language." In the instances, however, where the native "response" to the given international "challenge" is bound up with the verbal texture of poetry, the "Slavic" element may become paramount. Thus, the "free verse" of Slavic Symbolism owes less to its Occidental model and catalyst, the French "vers libre," than to the accentual pattern of common Slavic oral tradition.

In summing up, Jakobson calls to the attention of the student of Slavic literatures "common formal devices due to the impact of the common Slavic linguistic patrimony," as well as common poetic forms which represent the residue of oral tradition shared by diverse Slavic peoples or of early Slavic cultural unity, embodied in so-called Old Church Slavonic language and literature. (Jakobson is referring here to a crucial fact of early Slavic cultural history—from the late ninth century until the first Crusade Old Church Slavonic served as the written language for the overwhelming majority of Christianized Slavs.)

Jakobson's challenging essay raises a number of controversial points. Some will argue that during the last few centuries the actual impact of the Church

Slavonic tradition upon Slavic literatures has been much less crucial than it was in the earlier stages of Slavic civilization. Others may inquire, as W. K. Matthews has already done in a recent discussion of *Harvard Slavic Studies*, whether the literary production of Slavic-speaking peoples is a sufficiently distinct and integrated entity to justify the use of the singular ("Slavic literature") rather than the plural ("Slavic literatures").

Yet, while as a general principle I would tend to agree with Professor Matthews' position, I doubt if his strictures are fully pertinent to Jakobson's plea for "comparative Slavic literature." What is at issue here is not so much the underlying unity of Slavic literatures, allegedly deduced from "mere" linguistic kinship, as the validity of "comparative Slavic poetics," i.e., of a comparative approach to those spheres of Slavic literary art which clearly depend on the poetic use of language. Few readers of Jakobson's study will deny that he has succeeded brilliantly in demonstrating the feasibility of such an approach and in indicating some of its rich rewards.

While Jakobson's analysis spans the vast field of Slavic literary history and theory, Dmitry Čiževsky brings his impressive philosophical and literary erudition to bear upon a work of the seventeenth-century Czech writer and thinker, J. A. Komenský (Comenius). Čiževsky's inquiry into the ideological and literary antecedents of Comenius' *Labyrinth of the World* explores the religious didactic writings of the Middle Ages and of non-Christian classical literature alike. While suggesting some dependence of the *Labyrinth* on Andreae's *Peregrinus* and the entire tradition of "spiritual journeys," Čiževsky insists on the fundamental originality of Comenius' work. A part of this claim rests on Comenius' formal inventiveness, which, along with thematic richness, makes the *Labyrinth*, according to Čiževsky, "one of the most beautiful works of Czech literature." This reviewer found particularly illuminating Čiževsky's discussion of one of Comenius' favorite devices, "negative analogy," i.e., a semantic shift whereby a human activity or a man-made object is resolved back into its physical ingredients (e.g., money is referred to as "glittering pieces of metal"). Čiževsky does not fail to point out that this verbal strategy "has been used copiously in modern literature, from the romanticists to L. Tolstoy and Bernard Shaw."

In a brief but incisive essay, Aleksander V. Solovyov discusses the recently detected echoes from the *Igor Tale*, a twelfth-century Russian epic masterpiece, in the poetic and biographic works of the late Middle Ages, and arrives at the conclusion that the *Tale* "was well known in Northeastern Russia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." Solovyov warns against judging the wealth or the relative popularity of secular poetry in Kievan Russia by the number of manuscripts available to the scholar. The "ancient poetic works," he points out, "were rarely copied and poorly preserved, but nevertheless they were read and sometimes even memorized."

The balance of Vol. I is concerned with more recent developments. Wiktor Weintraub contributes a judicious and well-documented essay on the politics of Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz. He tells the complex and often bewildering story of Mickiewicz the politician with skill and scholarly discernment, steering clear of uncritical hero worship and of the shrill partisanship which has vitiated so much traditional Mickiewicz scholarship. Weintraub does not gloss over contradictions or weaknesses in Mickiewicz's political philosophy. While paying tribute to his "singleness of purpose, his spirit of sacrifice, and burning passion," Mr. Weintraub sees clearly that, as a "romantic mystic," the great poet and patriot "had no firm grasp of political realities." "His politics," concludes the author, "were not of this world."

With Weintraub's study we enter an area where literary history overlaps with the history of ideas. The articles of Otokar Odložilík and Michael B. Petrovich

belong in this domain. Odložilík traces the rise of modern Czech nationalism "on the eve of the 1848 Revolution." Petrovich illuminates the attitude of Russian Pan-Slavists toward the Polish Uprising of 1863. Even if Mr. Petrovich at times seems to lean backwards to be fair to the late Slavophile spokesmen, he succeeds, on the whole, in establishing a distinction between the official nationalists and the "Pan-Slavists," whose attitude toward Poland was made up of nationalistic vindictiveness and crude anti-Catholic bias, tempered somewhat by the traditional Slavophile belief in the "equality of all members of the Slavic family."

Toward the end of the volume "pure" literature again takes the center of the stage. In a sensitive essay Renato Poggioli probes the "Parnassian" art of Ivan Bunin. Especially perceptive is the section devoted to *Dry Valley*, a novel which Poggioli hails as Bunin's masterpiece and describes rather aptly as a "tragic pastoral."

M. Součková's paper, "Marxist Theory in Czech Literature," contains much valuable information on the sad plight of the writer and critic in "new" Czechoslovakia. But this illuminating account is marred by occasional inaccuracies. After indicating an "essential difference between the original art theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin and that of Stalinism," Mrs. Součková writes: "The founders of Communism had an inflexible doctrine on the relationship between the Party and art..." Now this is a bit misleading. For one thing, the Soviet hagiographers notwithstanding, the casual remarks on art and literature scattered through the Marx-Engels heritage do not add up to a coherent "doctrine" of any kind. For another, the general tenor of these utterances, as distinguished from Lenin's, is a far cry from the crude political instrumentalism which is a distinctively *Bolshevik* contribution to Marxist aesthetics.

In the last article of Vol. I, the editor of the series, Horace G. Lunt, gives an extremely useful survey of emerging Macedonian literature. During his recent trip to Macedonia, Mr. Lunt was in a position to observe at close range the coming of age of this newest Slavic literary language.

One of the most interesting parts of the "modern" section of Vol. I is provided by "Letters of Maksim Gorky to V. F. Khodasevich [a gifted post-Symbolist Russian poet and critic], 1922-1925," carefully translated and edited by Hugh McLean and preceded by a brief introduction by S. Yakobson. Some of these letters, "written in Western Europe, outside the domain of Soviet censorship" (S. Yakobson), reflect grave concern over the increasing curtailment of intellectual freedom in Russia and thus give the lie to the official Soviet image of Gorky as a staunch supporter of Lenin since 1905.

Toward the end of the period covered by this collection of letters Gorky was apparently veering toward a reconciliation with the Communist regime. This tortuous process, marked by evasions and wishful thinking, led to the breaking off of the correspondence between Gorky and Khodasevich, an intransigent foe of Bolshevism.

The second volume of *Harvard Slavic Studies* is, on the whole, a worthy sequel to the admirable symposium which preceded it. Once again some of the most valuable contributions are directed toward the earlier stages of Slavic civilization. Here, however, the mediaevalist emphasis is often coupled with a strong interest in the manifold links between Byzantium and the Slavic world, especially its Eastern segment.

This partial shift of focus has to do with the fact that Vol. II is dedicated to Francis Dvornik, an internationally known authority on Byzantine and early Slavic history, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Dmitri Obolensky offers a concise and affectionate recapitulation of F. Dvornik's scholarly achievement. A number of other specialists in the field probe various facets and repercussions of what Obolensky calls the "Slavo-Byzantine traditions" of Great Moravia. Milton

V. Anastos discusses the political philosophy underlying the *Lives* of the Slavic Apostles Constantine and Methodius. André Grabar contributes a provocative essay on the mediaeval Byzantine notion of Christian sovereigns as a "family of princes" presided over by the Byzantine emperor. George C. Soulis outlines the policy of the Serbian Tsar Stefan Dusan toward the famous Greek Orthodox monastery of Mount Athos, while Ihor Ševčenko traces the impact of a "neglected" political treatise upon the authoritarian ideology of Muscovite Russia.

A compact and richly documented study by Jacobson throws much light on the "minor native sources for the early history of the Slavic Church." Perhaps the most important point in Jakobson's intricate argument is his assertion that passages in the Primary Russian Chronicle dealing with the Slavic West can be traced back to a Church Slavonic apologetic text, which was "compiled in Moravia by one of the zealots of the Slavic Church at the very end of the ninth century," and found reflection in two Czech-Latin legends concerning the baptism of Moravia.

One of the most appealing essays in Vol. II of *Harvard Slavic Studies* was culled from the manuscripts of the late N. S. Trubetzkoy. Lucidity of exposition, aptness in phrasing, and unerring historical sense make Trubetzkoy's "Introduction to the History of Old Russian Literature" a model of its kind. Trubetzkoy properly cautions against measuring early Russian culture, with its essential homogeneity and clear-cut hierarchy of values, by yardsticks derived from modern European civilization, wherein each cultural realm tends toward autonomy, if not independence. He describes sensitively the "ethos" of Eastern Christianity and its impact upon the stylistic pattern of Byzantine and Old Russian art, which aimed to "supply to the imagination of the believers a graphic idea of the spiritually transfigured world of the heavenly Kingdom."

Like Solov'yov, Trubetzkoy deplores the tendency to equate the actual literary output in old Russia with the "store of manuscripts handed down to us." The unchallenged hegemony of religious values which prevailed in Kievan Russia was conducive to fragility rather than to actual dearth of poetic endeavor. "Copying . . . was undertaken only in cases of real necessity or out of religious considerations. In old Russia the purely literary works were usually not written down, but merely transmitted orally." Therefore it would be totally erroneous, argues Trubetzkoy, to conclude from the scarcity of *preserved* monuments of secular fiction that Kievan Russia lacked highly developed aesthetic culture, especially since the discovery of mediaeval Russian iconography gave the *coup de grâce* to "the myth of Old Russian primitiveness and barbarism."

Whereas Trubetzkoy's generalizations owe some of their cogency to the view of a literary phenomenon as a *sui generis* structure, with its own principles of integration, Čiževsky applies the "structural" approach to the question of genres in Old Russian literature. He starts from the assumption that "in the older literature, more than in the writings of later periods and of our own time, the composition, the stylistic peculiarities, and even to some degree the contents of a work of literature are determined by the genre to which it belongs." In line with this, Čiževsky takes to task those students of early Russian literature who assert flatly that the famous twelfth-century Russian preacher, Cyril of Turov, could not have written certain sermons which are attributed to him, because their simplicity contrasts with the grand, ornate manner of the "sermons which are surely his." "Cyril of Turov," argues Čiževsky, "like the preachers of ancient Christianity and Byzantium, could write sermons in different styles, depending on the type of subject and the audience for which they were intended."

A paper on the leading religious statesman of Petrine Russia, Teofan Prokopovich, by Jury Šerech, Stanislaw Kot's interesting study of ethnic stereotypes as reflected in mediaeval literature, "Notes on Digenis Akritas and Serbocroatian

Epic" by Albert Lord, and a paper by Odložilik, "From Velehrad to Olomouc," conclude the discussion of earlier periods in Slavic cultural history. Among the miscellaneous ventures into the more recent past the essay by Hugh McLean on the nineteenth-century Russian writer N. Leskov deserves special praise. Mr. McLean discusses the use made by Leskov of a narrative manner known in Russian literary theory as *skaz*. The brief methodological section of the paper in which *skaz* is defined as "stylistically individualized inner narrative placed in the mouth of a fictional character and designed to produce the impression of oral speech," represents to my knowledge the most adequate treatment of the subject in English. However, the value of Mr. McLean's essay does not lie in general formulations alone. It rests primarily on a meticulous and sensitive stylistic analysis, disentangling various devices interwoven into the rich texture of a Leskovian *skaz*.

The remainder of the volume includes some Pushkiniana (W. Lednicki, R. Burgi), articles on Polish and Czech literatures (J. Lechoń, W. Weintraub, M. Součková, R. Sturm, R. Wellek), and a discussion of "Folk Religion in Eastern Yugoslavia" (M. S. Filipovič). All these articles are slender in size; some of them are rather lightweight in quality. (This is especially true of Rudolf Sturm's paper on the Czech poet Josef Sládek). J. Lechoń's essay on Stefan Żeromski, outside of some questionable theses, provides a viable and engagingly written introduction to one of Poland's major novelists. However, since the article does not contain any new facts about Żeromski or any fresh interpretation of those already known, its appropriateness in a volume such as this is open to question.

Some of the minor pieces in Vol. II fall considerably below the general level of *Harvard Slavic Studies*, though they would have made fairly respectable contributions to many a journal. Here, side by side with pathbreaking scholarly studies, they seem incongruous and out of place.

These are, however, minor blemishes on what is, on the whole, a richly rewarding and auspicious venture. The editors of the new Harvard series have put all students of Slavic culture in their debt by making available some of the most vital and mature recent research in the field of Slavic studies.

VICTOR ERLICH

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YEARBOOK OF COMPARATIVE AND GENERAL LITERATURE. Edited by W. P. Friedrich and Horst Frenz. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Vol. II (1953), x, 164 p. Vol. III (1954), iv, 196 p.

The quality of the first issue of the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* was a happy demonstration that this publication had graduated, *magna cum laude*, from its long newsletter apprenticeship. The second and third issues indicate that, without pause in its stride, the *Yearbook* is moving steadily forward on what promises to be a fruitful and vigorous career.

Continuing the pattern set by *Yearbook* I, each of these issues contains five parts: a section of articles concerned with comparative literature or general literature; a number of short appreciative articles about pioneers and leaders in these fields (enriched by full-page photographs and including, we are glad to see, men still living); a roundup of reports on departments of comparative literature in universities and other activities in the field; book reviews; and the annual bibliography of comparative literature.

In the first section of both II and III the assessment of the aims of comparative literature, so brilliantly begun by Henri Peyre in I, is carried on in lively fashion. In II René Wellek attacks sharply the concept of comparative literature advocated by J.-M. Carré of the Sorbonne and his disciple, M.-F. Guyard, as "obfus-

cating and, if it should become universal, destructive of a meaningful study of literature." In Mr. Wellek's opinion M. Carré's program of studying sources, influences, and reputations and also comparative national myths is "both too narrow and too broad, falsely limited and falsely extended"; it "carries us, on the one hand, back into the old days of positivistic fragmentations, and, on the other, abolishes the clear subject matter of our study in favor of sociology and national psychology." The "clear subject matter of our study" is evidently, for Mr. Wellek, simply all imaginative literature, independent of geographical and linguistic distinctions, freed of "the obvious falsity of the idea of a self-enclosed national literature."

In an article in III, David H. Malone (who had already given M. Guyard's *La Littérature comparée* a severe review in II) agrees that the "quasi-scientific" methodology of the French comparatist school is "sterile." While he appears to take issue with Mr. Wellek in maintaining that "comparative literature" is a separate species of the class "study of literature," one feels that he is only asserting more explicitly some of Mr. Wellek's assumptions. Mr. Malone tells us that "the fullest meaning and the final evaluation of a piece of literature can result only from comparison"; that evaluation means "comparing the effectiveness and complexity of the symbolic projection of experience in one text" with those in other texts; and that the comparatist "develops his skills in two or three or four or five languages not for the purpose of tracing currents and influences across political boundaries, but because he recognizes that there are no such boundaries to the context, to the continuum of western literature."

These samplings of two articles will serve to illustrate the value of the *Yearbook* as a forum for the varying claims of comparatists. The debate should go on, and it should certainly include a rejoinder to Mr. Wellek and Mr. Malone by M. Carré, whose theories are so far represented only by the very brief and consequently overcategorical preface to M. Guyard's book, reprinted in *Yearbook* I. Mr. Wellek himself points out that "M. Carré's own work, on *Goethe in England*, is sensitive and subtle and contradicts the narrow positivism which he seems to recommend today." This reviewer does not expect that agreement will ever be reached, as Mr. Malone believes it must, on a "coherent" view of "the province" of comparative literature, and suggests that mutually tolerant divergencies in pre-occupations and methods are healthier for the movement as a whole than exclusive and restrictive uniformity. We shall need to keep coming back to the wise words of Mr. Peyre in *Yearbook* I: "Comparatists do not agree among themselves, most fortunately, on the relative importance and fertility of the different domains within their empire. Each generation should always remain free to shift the emphasis from one to the other, and an imaginative scholar may at any time prove that a field that had been branded as barren may conceal untold wealth."

The *Yearbook* provides also an increasing store of information, both historical and descriptive, about teaching and research in comparative literature all over the world. No. II carries reports from ten American universities (five of them reporting for the first time) and III carries nine more (four of which are new). There are also good general surveys of comparative literature in Poland, Roumania, and Japan (in II) and in the United Kingdom (in III).

The field of "general literature" or "world literature," while often discussed to some extent in the articles and reports already mentioned, is given particular attention in a number of articles, of which I find the outstanding ones to be a strong discussion by Calvin S. Brown on "Debased Standards in World-Literature Courses" (II) and the description and analysis by Ralph P. Rosenberg of "Great Books" programs in five American universities (III). It should be noted, too, that the bulk of the reviews of professional works fall into this field. So, naturally,

do the reviews of recent translations and editions, and these seem to me to constitute one of the noteworthy contributions of the *Yearbook*. Despite the need for both the comparatist and the teacher of courses in world literature to know well at least one or two foreign languages (and one is glad to see this fact stressed frequently by contributors to the *Yearbook*), there always comes a point where one has to fall back on translations, and all teachers of literature can be grateful for the critical and usually comparative appraisals here provided. In the two *Yearbooks* under review there are appraisals of translations from Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, Russian—and Middle English.

Among many other items of interest I must make special mention of George L. Anderson's very full survey (in III) of "The Study of Oriental Languages and Literatures in American Colleges and Universities."

The principal contribution of the *Yearbook* is still its bibliography, furnishing annual supplements to the Baldensperger-Friederich *Bibliography of Comparative Literature*. The practice is continued of including not only titles of new books and articles, but also earlier items omitted from *BFB* and items (indicated with an asterisk except in the case of the completely rewritten Scandinavian section) which were faulty, incomplete, or wrongly classified in *BFB*. The number of these additions and rectifications demonstrates both the great desirability of a new edition of *BFB*, but also perhaps the wisdom of waiting a year or two more until a dwindling flow of completion and correction indicates that a second edition can be reasonably definitive. Not all the weak spots of *BFB* pointed out in Mr. Weldek's review in *Comparative Literature*, III (1951), 90-92—in the fields of literary genres or literary criticism, for example—have been strengthened in the *Yearbook*. However, more and more scholars are coming to the aid of the valiant editor in this task of perfecting an already remarkably effective work. It is good to find in *Yearbook* II the incorporation of the bibliographical listings of the Prose Literature Group of the Modern Language Association, and in III the collaboration as well of the Franco-German Group—the more so because these contributions are accompanied by brief annotations, informative or critical, and lead us to hope that this practice may be extended. I should consider this hope Utopian if it were not being carried out so well in the Cabene bibliography. By the same analogy, may we not hope for the almost more useful inclusion of reference to significant reviews of books?

One serious limitation of the bibliography remains the omission of whole categories of entries, so that readers concerned with one field may find it completely lacking in one or even two successive issues of the *Yearbook*. It is difficult to see the logic in the editorial explanation that "considerations of space necessitated the temporary omission of many chapters not represented by enough new cards," since the accumulated entries will take up just as much space in a subsequent *Yearbook*. Obviously, a rigid quota of pages makes full bibliographical coverage impossible and sets a false quantitative standard for selective coverage. It is true that the space devoted to bibliography is increasing: I, 64 p.; II, 70 p.; III, 93 p. But greater space devoted to articles and reviews increases too, in approximate proportion: I, 80 p.; II, 90 p.; III, 101 p. Further elasticity for the annual bibliography could be achieved by arranging, when necessary, to have some articles or reviews passed to this journal, where they might just as appropriately appear. Better still would be more elasticity in the budget, and if I join in the hue and cry for an INDEX, for the numbering of items and more cross reference, as well as for full annual coverage, it is in part to strengthen the editors' hands in insisting to the financial backers of the *Yearbook* that a publication of this quality and importance should not be allowed to continue to suffer from mechanical defects.

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THE BRAGGART IN RENAISSANCE COMEDY. A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare. By Daniel C. Boughner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954. 328 p.

The tremendous amount of reading done by Mr. Boughner and the years of research spent in tracking down all evidence of a chosen theme once more brings to the fore the rather painful question of whether studies in thematology are really worth the effort that goes into them. The figure of the braggart in literature is quite fascinating. Mr. Boughner sketches it as beginning even before Plautus (e.g., in Aristophanes' *Frogs*) and traces it down into the Italian Renaissance. Yet just this ubiquity of the *miles gloriosus* in sixteenth-century Italy makes us wonder about the value of ever new synopses of plots and ever new twists of characterizations; for the more it changes, the more it is the same thing. About the only interesting new feature in this particular case was the verve with which the Italians used the *miles* in order to caricature and scorn the hated Spanish invaders—who, in addition to the usual traits of the Italian Terremoto, Tremacielo, Frangipietra, Cacciadiavoli, or Tagliaferro, were ridiculed as dandies.

The value of the book is heightened (though the argument, in a way, is weakened) in the later chapters, where Mr. Boughner investigates the types of braggarts in England, Spain, and France. In the case of England, for instance, the Roman and Italian types do not prevail, and the native English development is quite different—so different, in fact, that one might hesitate to include King Herod of the English miracle plays; he is far more a Senecan villain, and his terrible boasts are far from being mere words. The figure of Vice in the mediaeval English morality plays—though a stupid braggart in his fights with Virtue—is also an unexpected topic in a book devoted to the Roman *miles* or the Renaissance pander, ruffian, or bully; for he is a typically mediaeval allegorical abstraction that has little to do with the flesh and blood *bravo* of sixteenth-century Italy. Still, the chapters dealing with England are interesting in themselves, for they sketch the indigenous antecedents of Shakespeare's Falstaff. Spain also showed a development quite her own; for the strutting braggart, living in stark poverty, among bawds and thieves, appeared in the *Celestina* decades before the Roman models or the comedies by Nardi, Aretino, or Cecchi were actually known in Spain. But Italian influences came in with Torres Naharro, Juan de Timoneda, Lope de Rueda, and others, and with these Mr. Boughner re-establishes a fairly common Roman-Italian-Spanish pattern of the braggart which had not been so evident in England and which evolved as a vainglorious boaster in the Spanish army in Italy or as a shrewd and loquacious *gracioso* in some local Spanish *comedia de capa y espada*. The last of the ten chapters deals with French comedy from Grévin to Molière. A discussion of a few of its representatives, mainly Baïf, Belleau, Larivey, and others, indicates that the French were second only to the Italians in their submissiveness to the classical models, and that their portrayals of the Matamores owed a good deal not only to the regular Italian comedy, but also to the *commedia dell'arte*.

After having tried to assimilate as much as possible of what must, quite literally, be hundreds of synopses, this reader will not dwell upon gaps in this book. The English chapters, for instance, stop long before Shakespeare, and therefore have nothing to say about Falstaff or the golden decades after 1580—whereas the Spanish chapter takes us up through Calderón. Mr. Boughner likewise refrains from including Dutch and German treatments of the *miles gloriosus*, such as Brederoo's *Spaansche Brabander Jerolimo*, Heinrich Julius von Braunschweig's *Vincentius Ladislaus*, or Gryphius' *Horribilicribrifax*. One might wish that there had been less, rather than more; that Mr. Boughner had reduced the overwhelming scope of his discussions and outlined the development and the striking national

characteristics or deviations of the type of the braggart in, say, some twenty really important plays. Or, failing that, that he might have added a short last chapter, summing up his major findings. As it is, the reader suffers from the *embarras de richesses* contained in this book.

W. P. F.

LOBGESANG. By Jorge Guillén. In Auswahl übertragen von Ernst Robert Curtius. Zürich: Arche Verlag, 1952. 79 p.

This small bilingual volume of sixteen poems represents the first German translation of Spain's outstanding living poet by the most distinguished living scholar-critic in Germany. The book is a valuable addition to Mr. Curtius' earlier translations of Valéry, Proust, Péguy, Gide, Joyce, Eliot, and Ortega, for whose introduction to a German audience Mr. Curtius was largely responsible.

Jorge Guillén, professor of Spanish literature at Wellesley College, has, inexplicably, so far not received the response abroad which his work so rightly deserves. In Spain he belonged to that group of highly talented poets (García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Pedro Salinas, Emilio Prados, G. Diego, et al.), ambiguously called "la generación de la Dictadura," who had completed their first significant works before the Civil War (e.g., Lorca's *Romancero gitano* and *Llanto por la muerte de Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*, Alberti's *Sobre los ángeles*, Salinas' *La voz a ti debida*, etc.). When Franco took over, Guillén emigrated, and so did most of the others. Almost all of them, however, continued and developed their work extensively in exile, reaching great maturity in recent years. Jorge Guillén's work has tripled in volume and grown in importance since he left Spain. The third edition of *Cántico* was published in 1945;¹ and in 1950 appeared what he himself designated as the final and first complete edition of this work. It contains 334 poems, and it is from this edition that Mr. Curtius has chosen the poems for his anthology.

Mr. Curtius's introduction to this welcome book is, like so many of his essays, a masterpiece of interpretation. It is also an elegant stylistic performance. With the great skill and erudition at his disposal, he succeeds in ten pages in expounding the principal relevant facts of Guillén's life and the essential qualities of his work. The work, says Mr. Curtius, is "ein einziger Lobgesang (p. 7) . . . Alles spielt sich hier in Dur ab, alles schwingt und jubelt in der Sonne. Hier sind keine 'Blumen des Bösen'" (p. 9). No statement could come closer to Guillén's serene and joyful attitude, which he himself in another poem so effectively describes when he asks, "Qué es ventura?" and then answers simply, "Lo que es" ("En plenitud," *Cántico*, p. 184). Indeed, the sheer joy of existence, of being in this world ("... quiero ser / Ser, nada más. Y basta / Es la absoluta dicha"), wonderfully pervades his work.

So completely different are these poems in their unquestioning and serene affirmation of life from almost everything written within the last thirty years that the reader is simply amazed at a contemporary poet's ability to experience the world in a Goethean light and to create such harmonious, delightful, and exalted lines ("Hacia una luz mis penas se consumen," p. 14). And this world is to repeat and to confirm itself in the valid poetic word, which potentially contains it, says Mr. Curtius ("forma de ese mundo posible en la palabra"). The poet's words and motifs, however, to quote one of Jorge Guillén's Spanish critics,

¹ The first edition of *Cántico*, published in Madrid in 1928, contained 75 poems; the second (Madrid, 1936) contained 125; and the third (Mexico City, 1945) 270 poems. The third and fourth editions evolve a new tendency toward an awareness of suffering on the one hand, and of nonlife on the other; they paint a kind of chiaroscuro with the same central emphasis as before, through a more discursive, reflective form.

"brotan siempre del trasfondo espiritual donde se remansan y decantan las sugerencias más hermosas de la realidad" (Ricardo Gullón, *La poesía de Jorge Guillén*, Zaragoza, 1949, p. 47). They suggest, indeed, the permanent themes which reality has to offer: "ser," "caos," "esencia," "todo," and motifs like "amanecer," "aire," "sol," "luz," "agua," "otoño," and "primavera." This poet's task, continues Mr. Curtius, is "del todo vivir, decir del todo" (p. 14). But, since life merely lived would be an imperfect life, words demand the transformation into form: "forma de plenitud precisa y casta." And Guillén expresses himself with the greatest possible verbal concentration. There are no expletives in this poetry. And, however paradoxical it may sound, the lyrical quality is here embodied in the structure of the poet's thoughts. Here too, then, we have, as with Valéry, George, and Benn, the economy, discipline, and rigor of the word. Words acquire here, to quote Gullón again, "su máximo valor, henchidas de savia, jugosas y con destello singular" (p. 53). So this poetry comes to be "zur abgrenzenden Funktion, zur äußersten Blüte des Lebens," as Mr. Curtius puts it, while he quotes Mr. Guillén's wonderful line: "¡Gracia de vida extrema, poesía!" (p. 15).

From all this it is obvious that Jorge Guillén's poetry presents to a translator problems of uncommon difficulty. Mr. Curtius is a close observer of the individual word or line, of meter, rhythm, and stanzaic form, and so follows the most sensible way to come as close to the original as possible. This results, of course, in occasional awkwardness. Yet, despite this, the reader is amazed to find so much poetic quality in the translation. This is particularly true of the following poems, some of which, unfortunately, do not appear complete in translation: "Los nombres," "Vida urbana," "Anillo" (only five out of eleven stanzas), "Amanece, amanezca," "Amplitud," "Vida externa," "Amistad de la noche" (which breaks off somewhat abruptly). All these read beautifully. In addition there are individual images which particularly deserve mention. For instance, the beautiful lines:

"Yo necesito los tamaños
Astrales: presencias sin años,
Montes de eternidad en bruto."

return with full felicity in:

"Ich will Sternendimensionen,
jahrlose Gegenwart zum Wohnen,
Bergebarer Ewigkeit."

(Page 69)

Since each translation is at the same time an interpretation, it is quite natural that there should be occasional renderings with which the reader does not agree. I wonder whether the word "Vergel," which Mr. Curtius quotes in a stanza at the end of his introduction, should not be both a variation and a qualification of "jardín"? It is, like "huerto," the Biblical term for the Garden of Eden and suggests, like the entire *Cántico*, the terrestrial paradise. Would it not then be better to avoid the somewhat awkward "Fruchtgarten" and to render this word simply by "ersten Garten"? The rather difficult image in Guillén's "Pero el sol de un álamo . . . / Ofrece una escuela / Cortés a lo raso" needs clarification in German. "Lo raso" obviously suggests a Castilian plain, probably arid and almost geometrical in shape, which the German "Feld" renders only insufficiently. I also have the feeling that the somewhat George-like rendering forces the mood and parts of the meaning of some of the poems onto a level of aloofness which the original does not have; for example, the fourth and fifth stanza of Part III of "Más allá" (p. 28). Apart from these one might add a few minor suggestions: I believe that the rather infrequently used word "ahincarse" (p. 38) means "sich anklammern," "sich befestigen." I also wonder if "Irreductibles, pero . . ." would not sound smoother if one sacrificed the correct and literal translation for "Unlösbar sind sie, aber . . ."

No one who has ever attempted to render foreign poetry into his native tongue will fail to admire the devotion and sensitivity of these translations. It is good to have this book, which adds to Mr. Curtius' excellent reputation as a translator and interpreter.

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THE CLASSIC ANTHOLOGY DEFINED BY CONFUCIUS. By Ezra Pound. With an Introduction by Achilles Fang. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954. xvi, 224 p.

If Pound's *Cantos* is a panorama of modern civilization since Dante, then the *Classic Anthology* is a panorama of the ancient civilization of China before Confucius.

Readers who were annoyed with the *Cantos* for its alleged obscurity and crudity will relish the *Classic Anthology* for its directness of expression and clarity of language. This difference is the result of methods of approach rather than of subject matter. Whereas in the *Cantos* Pound experiments with the "ideogrammic method," in the *Classic Anthology* he is ruled by the "ideogrammic" pattern, as he understands it, already laid out for him by the Chinese text. His mission here is to translate the *Shih Ching* (known as the *Book of Odes* or the *Book of Poetry*), which consists of 305 odes supposedly arranged by Confucius.

To anticipate the righteous indignation of the Sinologists, who tend to examine any translation through their linguistic monocles, and to offset their strictures on inaccuracies, it should be pointed out at the beginning that Pound's *Classic Anthology* is not a translation but rather a *transmigration*; it is the reincarnation of the *Shih Ching*, with its ghost made into new flesh and blood, inheriting the characteristics of Pound and of the Western tradition behind him, yet retaining its racial memories of the past. A single example from the text of the *Anthology* (No. 95), will illustrate my point.

SAY IT WITH PEONIES

"Chen and Wei
flow thereby

touching together,
Man and girl, girl and man
to pluck valerian:

'The play?' says she.

'Seen it' says he.

'If so, let's go

Over Wei pleasantly.'

Playing there, girls and men
Prescribe this mutual medicine

Chen and Wei in alacrity
as pampas blades a-gleam
by bank and stream
come girls and a throng of officers.

She says: 'Have you seen . . . ?'

He says: 'I been.'

'Let's again.' Over Wei

Pleasantly.

**Ready girl, ready man
offer mutual medicine."**

(Pages 44-45)

Now contrast this with Bernhard Karlgren's literal version, which is perhaps more faithful to the original:

"1. The Chen and the Wei (streams) are just now amply-flowing; knights and girls are just holding *kien* in their hands; girl says: 'have you been and looked?' The knight says: 'I have.'—'Shall we go again and look?'—'Beyond the Wei, there is truly great (space) and pleasant.' The knight and the girl, they are going to sport together; the one presents the other with a peony.—2. The Chen and the Wei, deep and clear-flowing is their clear (water); knights and girls, in great crowds they fill (the ground); a girl says (etc. as in St. 1)" (*The Book of Odes*, pp. 61-62).

Karlgren's translation is included here only to show the meaning of the Chinese text. What he renders as "peony" is probably, in its archaic usage, quite a different plant—a kind of scented grass, as pointed out by some commentators. However that may be, the original term is a concrete object, used as a symbol of love, which is exchanged between the boy and girl. This symbol, passing through the creative process of Pound's mind, is alchemized into "medicine." Thus the idea merely suggested becomes in Pound's version crudely matter-of-fact.

This is one of the many instances indicative of Pound's way of reading Chinese in isolated ideograms. The Chinese term *shao-yao* is, in its modern sense, peony or peonies. It is composed of two ideograms: *shao*, a measure of weight (in modern writing the "grass" signific is added to indicate the meaning of plant), and *yao*, medicine or drugs. When used in combination, both ideograms lose their independent meanings and become the morphological components of the noun *shao-yao* or peony. But one should not suggest that Pound was uninformed on the general meaning of this term and used erroneously the dictionary meanings of the isolated ideograms. For he has shrewdly forestalled such an assumption by labeling this verse "Say It With Peonies" instead of the original title "Chen Wei" (names of two streams), although the word "peonies" never recurs in the poem. In all probability what happened is that Pound, failing to see the denotation of *shao-yao*, dug into the roots of these ideograms for new possibilities and found that the ideogram *shao* is the homophone of another word (*shao* with "woman" signific instead of "grass") meaning "go-between" and that *yao* means "medicine." From these discoveries, with a little stretch of the imagination, Pound derives the "mutual medicine." The change from "peony" into "medicine" may have intensified the implicit import of the poem in a new language; it has nevertheless reduced the subtlety and the symbolic value of the original poetry.

Regarded simply as translation, this book is vulnerable to attack. The linguistic inaccuracies, the free additions and omissions, the misinterpretations of the original work, would be considered sacrilegious by philologists. In this work, as Mr. Fang implies in the Introduction (p. xiii), Pound tries with his "thoughts to comprehend the intention" of the *Shih Ching*. But this is not all. He tries also to mold that intention according to his own lights. Compared with the somniferous versions of the same classic by others, Pound's *Classic Anthology*, though often failing to preserve the detail of the original work, does succeed in conjuring up the spirit—poetry—which is absent from most of the other renditions.

Commenting on the renderings of ancient texts, Pound states in a footnote to his edition of Fenollosa's essay, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium of Poetry": "The poet in dealing with his own time, must also see to it that language does not petrify on his hands. He must prepare for new advances along the lines of true metaphor that is interpretive metaphor..." Bearing this in mind, one need not be alarmed at finding in the *Classic Anthology* lines as unclassical and un-Chinese as "Ole Brer Rabbit watchin' his feet..." (p. 35); "Hill-

billy, hill-billy come to buy" (p. 28); and "purse kaput, nothing to pledge" (p. 19). In dealing with his own time and people, Pound, whom T. S. Eliot called "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time," has reconstructed the *Shih Ching* in idioms and expressions that are not only comprehensible but startlingly slangy to the English-speaking world.

From the purely literary point of view, many of the pages of the *Classic Anthology* sparkle with brilliant colors and imagery and vibrate with rhythms and emotion charged with primitive beauty. One notices that the musical quality which eluded Pound in the *Cathay* (1915) pervades the *Classic Anthology*. Pound frequently uses onomatopoeia in the Chinese manner: "Cl-ang, cl-ang go the bells," "Ch-in, ch-in of the bells," or "K'an, k'an / axes clank." He also makes extensive use of monosyllabic words in an attempt to imitate the Chinese sound. This growing aural awareness of the Chinese language is of special interest when one recalls that the poet wrote in 1940: "When it comes to the question of transmitting from the East to the West, a great part of the Chinese sound is no use at all. We don't hear parts of it, and much of the rest is a hiss or a mumble..." (*Letters of Ezra Pound*, p. 347).

Pound's choice of the ballad meter, as Mr. Fang says in the Introduction, is a happy one. But it is rather the variety of the metric patterns which heightens the effect of this work.

Despite his deficiencies as a translator, Pound has enriched world literature with new-found treasure. The richness of the *Shih Ching*, however, is not fully explored. The imagery has for the most part been recaptured with freshness, but the meanings of the Chinese symbols which are foreign to the Western mind are sadly ignored. To reproduce these symbols, however, with their original strength and profundity would require a perfect grasp of both Chinese and Western traditions. This, perhaps, is too much to expect—even from a convert.

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DAS SHAKESPEARE-BILD GOETHE'S. By Horst Oppel. Mainz: Verlag Kirchheim & Co., 1949. 118 p.

Previous publications by men like Van Tieghem, Price, and Gundolf have told us so much about the problem of Shakespeare and Goethe that it was to be expected that Mr. Oppel would have to present the question from a different angle in order to justify the existence of his book. This study is indeed not so much a discussion of the actual influence of Shakespeare (which is briefly recapitulated in Chapter I, pp. 23-36) as a discussion of the philosophical interpretation of Shakespeare by Goethe. The emphasis is on Goethe the philosopher, the scientist, the critic, the disciple of Spinoza and especially of Linnaeus—and how Shakespeare, far more than anyone else, corroborated Goethe's concept of the creative genius.

The book is too often marred by nebulous verbosity, by a certain jargon,¹ and by a tendency toward abstractedness. One wonders how much the members of Professor Oppel's seminar in Mainz (to whom the work is dedicated) were able

¹ Thus, for instance, in his attack on other types of investigators: "Wer mit biographisch-psychologischer Lüsterheit in den geweihten Raum dieser Begegnung eindringen will, den hält Goethe mit seiner geschlossenen Würde im Zaum, so daß jeder Begehr vor seinem bloßen Blick und Ton als vor etwas Fremdem zurückweichen muß. Nur die unermüdlich Geistreichelnden mit ihren halb verlegenen Scherzen und die stockblinden Abhängigkeitsfanatiker mit ihren schwerfälligen Argumenten können sich unter seltsamem Wahn in diesem Reiche zu Hause fühlen" (pp. 23-24).

to get out of this kind of baroque phraseology. But this does not detract from the basic soundness of Mr. Oppel's thesis that the scientific Goethe should be more thoroughly consulted by the literary historian, and that Shakespeare alone gives evidence of a truly God-willed naturalness of organic growth in which there is no "too much" and no "too little." Mr. Oppel sums up some of his findings thus: "Vor allem im Werke Shakespeares sah [Goethe] eine ursprüngliche Schöpfungskraft am Werk, welche die lebendigen Gewalten im Fliehen und Suchen, in Widerspruch und Entsprechung trennt und verbindet—welche zwischen dem Getrennten ein vielfältiges Kräftespiel erregt und gleichzeitig in dem Entgegengesetzten, das doch zueinander gehört, ein Ganzes enthüllt. Für sich allein besteht schlechthin nichts. Alles strebt, wirkt, leistet, vermehrt, vermindert, verdichtet—während im Ausgleich all dieser Bewegungen das sich selbst erzeugende Ganze in unnachahmlicher Sicherheit ruht" (p. 74).

Mr. Oppel's study of Goethe's grasp of Shakespeare is based particularly on *Hamlet* (Chapter V; the plan of this tragedy "ist nicht ersonnen, *es ist so*"), *Henry IV* (Chapter VII), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Chapter VIII); these plays offered Goethe the best evidence of Shakespeare's creative power. Though many of Mr. Oppel's viewpoints are highly subjective and may therefore often be debatable, his plea for a fuller understanding of great poetry, and against petty quibbling over minor aspects, is fully justified. "An Shakespeare hat Goethe nicht anders als an der pflanzlichen Metamorphose bewundert, 'wie die Natur, solch ein Ungeheures, das wie nichts aussieht, aus dem Einfachen das Mannigfaltigste entwickelt.' Jedoch 'das Mannigfaltigste' als Ausdruck eines 'geheimen Gesetzes,' eines 'heiligen Rätsels,' welches die strenge Ordnung verbürgt. Diese Ordnung ist der Dichtung Shakespeares nicht von außen auferlegt. Sie ist aus dem Zusammenhang und dem inneren Wesen der Dinge selbst heraus entwickelt. So merkt man sie kaum und spürt nur Leben. Denn sie preßt das Lebendige nicht ein, sondern sie trägt es. Und sie festigt es zu einem höheren eigentlichen Sein" (pp. 93-94).

W. P. F.

VARIA

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual Symposium of the Catholic Renaissance Society will be held on April 11-12, 1955, at the Hotel Pfister in Milwaukee, Wis. The projected topic is "Literary Criticism Today." Details may be obtained from the executive director, Catholic Renaissance Society, Mount Mary College, Milwaukee 10, Wis.

The eighth University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference will be held April 28-30, 1955, in Lexington. The theme will be "Foreign Languages and the Humanities." The director of the conference is Professor Jonah W. D. Skiles, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.

The History of Ideas News Letter is a new and welcome tool. It will appear quarterly under the direction of Professors Rosalie Colie (Barnard College), Pierre R. Garai (Columbia University), and Samuel I. Mintz (City College). The subscription is \$1.00 annually, sustaining subscription, \$5.00, payable to Rosalie L. Colie, Barnard College, New York 27, N.Y.

Beginning with this issue *Comparative Literature* will be indexed in the *International Index to Periodicals*.





